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- ART. VII. — 1. *Salem Witchcraft, with an Account of Salem Village, and a History of Opinions on Witchcraft and Kindred Subjects.* By CHARLES W. UPHAM. Boston : Wiggan and Lunt. 1867. 2 vols.
2. IOANNIS WIERI *de praestigiis daemonum, et incantationibus ac veneficiis libri sex, postrema editione sexta aucti et recogniti. Accessit liber apologeticus et pseudomonarchia daemonum. Cum rerum et verborum copioso indice. Cum Caes. Maiest. Regisq; Galliarum gratia et privelegio.* Basilæ ex officina Oporiniani, 1583.
3. SCOT'S *Discovery of Witchcraft: proving the common opinions of Witches contracting with Devils, Spirits, or Familiars; and their power to kill, torment, and consume the bodies of men, women, and children, or other creatures by diseases or otherwise; their flying in the Air, &c.; To be but imaginary Erronious conceptions and novelties; Wherein also the lewde, unchristian practises of Witchmongers, upon aged, melancholy, ignorant and superstitious people in extorting confessions by inhumane terrors and Tortures, is notably detected. Also The knavery and confederacy of Conjurors. The impious blasphemy of Inchanters. The imposture of Soothsayers, and infidelity of Atheists. The delusion of Pythonists, Figure-casters, Astrologers, and vanity of Dreamers. The fruitlesse beggarly art of Alchimystry. The horrible art of Poisoning and all the tricks and conveyances of juggling and liegerdemain are fully deciphered. With many other things opened that have long lain hidden: though very necessary to be known for the undeceiving of Judges, Justices, and Juries, and for the preservation of poor, aged, deformed, ignorant people; frequently taken, arraigned, condemned and executed for Witches, when according to a right understanding, and a good conscience, Physick, Food, and necessaries should be administered to them. Whereunto is added a treatise upon the nature and substance of Spirits and Devils &c. all written and published in Anno 1584.* By REGINALD SCOT, Esquire. Printed by R. C. and are to be sold by Giles Calvert dwelling at the Black Spread-Eagle, at the West-End of Pauls, 1651.
4. *De la Demonomanie des Sorciers.* A MONSEIGNEUR M.

CHRESTOFE DE THOU, Chevalier, Seigneur de Cœli, premier President en la Cour de Parlement et Conseiller du Roy en son privé Conseil. Reveu, Corrigé, et augmenté d'une grande partie. Par I. BODIN ANGEVIN. A Paris : Chez Jacques Du Puits, Libraire Juré, à la Samaritaine. M.D.LXXXVII. Avec privilege du Roy.

5. *Magica, seu mirabilium historiarum de Spectris et Apparitionibus spirituum : Item, de magicis et diabolicis incantationibus. De Miraculis, Oraculis, Vaticiniis, Divinationibus, Prædictionibus, Revelationibus et aliis eiusmodi multis ac varijs præstigijs, ludibrijs et imposturis malorum Dæmonum.* Libri II. Ex probatis et fide dignis historiarum scriptoribus diligenter collecti. Islebiæ, cura, Typis et sumptibus Henningi Grossij Bibl. Lipo. 1597. Cum privilegio.
6. *The displaying of supposed Witchcraft wherein is affirmed that there are many sorts of Deceivers and Impostors, and divers persons under a passive Delusion of Melancholy and Fancy. But that there is a corporeal league made betwixt the Devil and the Witch, or that he sucks on the Witchis body, has carnal copulation, or that Witches are turned into Cats, Dogs, raise Tempests or the like is utterly denied and disproved. Wherein is also handled, The existence of Angels and Spirits, the truth of Apparitions, the Nature of Astral and Sydereal Spirits, the force of Charms and Philters ; with other abstruse matters.* By JOHN WEBSTER, Practitioner in Physick. *Falsa etenim opinioniones Hominum non solum surdos sed et cæcos faciunt, ita ut videre nequeant quæ aliis perspicua apparent.* Galen. lib. 8, de Comp. Med. London : Printed by I. M. and are be sold by the booksellers in London. 1677.
7. *Sadducismus Triumphatus : or Full and Plain Evidence concerning Witches and Apparitions. In two Parts. The First treating of their Possibility ; the Second of their Real Existence.* By JOSEPH GLANVIL, late Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty, and Fellow of the Royal Society. The third edition. The advantages whereof above the former, the Reader may understand out of Dr H. More's Account prefixed thereunto. With two Authentick, but wonderful Stories of certain Swedish Witches. Done into English by A. HORNECK DD. London, Printed for S. L. and are to be sold by Anth. VOL. CVI. — NO. 218.

Baskerville at the Bible, the corner of Essex-street, without Temple-Bar. M.DCLXXXIX.

8. *Demonologie ou Traitte des Demons et Sorciers : De leur puissance et impuissance* : Par FR. PERRAUD. Ensemble L'Antidemon de Mascon, ou Histoire Veritable de ce qu'un Demon a fait et dit, il y a quelques années en la maison dudit S^r Perreaud à Mascon. I. Jacques iv. 7, 8. *Resistez au Diable, et il s'enfuira de vous. Approchez vous de Dieu, et il s'approchera de vous.* A Geneve, chez Pierre Aubert. M,DC,LIII.
9. *The Wonders of the Invisible World. Being an account of the tryals of several witches lately executed in New-England.* By COTTON MATHER, D. D. *To which is added a farther account of the tryals of the New England Witches.* By INCREASE MATHER, D. D., President of Harvard College. London : John Russell Smith, Soho Square. 1862. (First printed in Boston, 1692.)
10. I. N. D. N. J. C. *Dissertatio Juridica de Lamüs earumque processu criminali*, Von Seren und dem peinf. Prozeß wider dieselben. *Quam, auxiliante Divina Gratia, Consensu et Authoritate Magnifici Jctorum Ordinis in illustribus Athenis Salanis sub præsidio Magnifici, Nobilissimi, Amplissimi, Consultissimi, atque Excellentissimi.* DN ERNESTI FRIDER. Schröter hereditarii in Wsderstätt, Jcti et Antecessoris hujus Salanæ Famigeratissimi, Consilarii Saxonici, Curiae Provincialis, Facultatis Juridicæ, et Scabinatus Assessoris longe Gravissimi, Domini Patroni, Præceptoris et Promotoris sui nullo non honoris et observantiæ cultu sanctè devenerandi, colendi, publicæ Eruitorum censuræ subjicit Michael Paris Walsburger, Græbzigâ Anhaltinus, in Acroaterio Jctorum ad diem 1. Maj. A. 1670. Editio Tertia. Jenæ, Typis Pauli Ehrichii. 1707.
11. *Histoire de Diables de Loudun, ou de la Possession des Religieuses Ursulines, et de la condamnation et du suplice d'Urbain Grandier, Curé de la même ville. Cruels effets de la Vengeance du Cardinal de Richelieu.* A Amsterdam Aux de pens de la Compagnie. M.DCC,LII.
12. *A view of the Invisible World, or General History of Apparitions. Collected from the best Authorities, both Antient and Modern, and attested by Authors of the highest Reputation and*

Credit. Illustrated with a Variety of Notes and parallel Cases ; in which some Account of the Nature and Cause of Departed Spirits visiting their former Stations by returning again into the present World, is treated in a Manner different to the prevailing Opinions of Mankind. And an Attempt is made from Rational Principles to account for the Species of such supernatural Appearances, when they may be suppos'd consistent with the Divine Appointment in the Government of the World. With the sentiments of Monsieur LE CLERC, Mr. LOCKE, Mr. ADDISON, and Others on this important Subject. In which some humorous and diverting instances are remark'd, in order to divert that Gloom of Melancholy that naturally arises in the Human Mind, from reading or meditating on such Subjects. Illustrated with suitable Cuts. London : Printed in the year M,DCC,LII. [Mainly from DeFoe's "History of Apparitions."]

13. *Satan ; Invisible World discovered ; or, a choice Collection of Modern Relations, proving evidently, against the Atheists of this present Age, that there are Devils, Spirits, Witches and Apparitions, from Authentic Records, Attestations of Witnesses, and undoubted Verity. To which is added that marvellous History of Major Weir and his Sister, the Witches of Balgaran, Pittenweem and Calder, &c. By GEORGE SINCLAIR, late Professor of Philosophy in Glasgow. No man should be vain that he can injure the merit of a Book ; for the meanest rogue may burn a City or kill a Hero ; whereas he could never build the one, or equal the other. Sir George M'Kenzie. Edinburgh : Sold by P. Anderson, Parliament Square. M.DCC.LXXX.*
14. *La Magie et l'Astrologie dans l'Antiquité et au Moyen Age, ou Étude sur les superstitions païennes qui se sont perpétuées jusqu'à nos jours. Par L. F. ALFRED MAURY. Troisième Edition revue et corrigée. Paris : Didier. 1864.*

CREDULITY, as a mental and moral phenomenon, manifests itself in widely different ways, according as it chances to be the daughter of fancy or terror. The one lies warm about the heart as Folk-love, fills moonlit dells with dancing fairies, sets out a meal for the Brownie, hears the tinkle of airy bridle-bells

as Tamlane rides away with the Queen of Dreams, changes Pluto and Proserpine into Oberon and Titania, and makes friends with unseen powers as Good Folk ; the other is a bird of night, whose shadow sends a chill among the roots of the hair : it sucks with the vampire, gorges with the ghoul, is choked by the night-hag, pines away under the witch's charm, and commits uncleanness with the embodied Principle of Evil, giving up the fair realm of innocent belief to a murky throng from the slums and stews of the debauched brain. Both have vanished from among educated men, and such superstition as comes to the surface now-a-days is the harmless Jacobitism of sentiment, pleasing itself with the fiction all the more because there is no exacting reality behind it to impose a duty or demand a sacrifice. And as Jacobitism survived the Stuarts, so this has outlived the dynasty to which it professes an after-dinner allegiance. It nails a horseshoe over the door, but keeps a rattle by its bedside to summon a more substantial watchman ; it hangs a crape on the beehives to get a taste of ideal sweetness, but obeys the teaching of the latest bee-book for material and marketable honey. This is the æsthetic variety of the malady, or rather, perhaps, it is only the old complaint robbed of all its pain and lapped in waking dreams by the narcotism of an age of science. To the world at large it is not undelightful to see the poetical instincts of friends and neighbors finding some other vent than that of verse. But there has been a superstition of very different fibre, of more intense and practical validity, the deformed child of faith, peopling the midnight of the mind with fearful shapes and phrenetic suggestions, a monstrous brood of its own begetting, and making even good men ferocious in imagined self-defence.

Imagination has always been, and still is, in a narrower sense, the great mythologizer ; but both its mode of manifestation and the force with which it reacts on the mind are one thing in its crude form of childlike wonder, and another thing after it has been more or less consciously manipulated by the poetic faculty. A mythology that broods over us in our cradles, that mingles with the lullaby of the nurse and the winter-evening legends of the chimney-corner, that brightens day with the

possibility of divine encounters, and darkens night with intimations of demonic ambushes, is of other substance than one which we take down from our bookcase, sapless as the shelf it stood on, and remote from all present sympathy with man or nature as a town history. It is something like the difference between live metaphor and dead personification. Primarily, the action of the imagination is the same in the mythologizer and the poet, that is, it forces its own consciousness on the objects of the senses, and compels them to sympathize with its own momentary impressions. When Shakespeare in his "Lucrece" makes

"The threshold grate the door to have him heard,"

his mind is acting under the same impulse that first endowed with human feeling and then with human shape all the invisible forces of nature, and called into being those

"Fair humanities of old religion,"

whose loss the poets mourn. So also Shakespeare no doubt projected himself in his own creations; but those creations never became so perfectly disengaged from him, so objective, or, as they used to say, extrinsecal, to him, as to react upon him like real and even alien existences. I mean permanently, for momentarily they may and must have done so. But before man's consciousness had wholly disentangled itself from outward objects, all nature was but a many-sided mirror which gave back to him a thousand images more or less beautified or distorted, magnified or diminished, of himself, till his imagination grew to look upon its own incorporations as having an independent being. Thus, by degrees, it became at last passive to its own creations. You may see imaginative children every day anthropomorphizing in this way, and the dupes of that superabundant vitality in themselves, which bestows qualities proper to itself on everything about them. There is a period of development in which grown men are childlike. In such a period the fables which endow beasts with human attributes first grew up; and we luckily read them so early as never to become suspicious of any absurdity in them. The Finnic epos of "Kalewala" is a curious illustration of the same fact. In that everything has the affections,

passions, and consciousness of men. When the mother of Lemminkäinen is seeking her lost son,—

“Sought she many days the lost one,
Sought him ever without finding;
Then the roadways come to meet her,
And she asks them with beseeching:
‘Roadways, ye whom God hath shapen,
Have ye not my son beholden,
Nowhere seen the golden apple,
Him, my darling staff of silver?’
Prudently they gave her answer,
Thus to her replied the roadways:
‘For thy son we cannot plague us,
We have sorrows too, a many,
Since our own lot is a hard one
And our fortune is but evil,
By dog’s feet to be run over,
By the wheel-tire to be wounded,
And by heavy heels down-trampled.’”

It is in this tendency of the mind under certain conditions to confound the objective with subjective, or rather to mistake the one for the other, that Mr. Tylor, in his “Early History of Mankind,” is fain to seek the origin of the supernatural, as we somewhat vaguely call whatever transcends our ordinary experience. And this, no doubt, will in many cases account for the particular shapes assumed by certain phantasmal appearances, though I am inclined to doubt whether it be a sufficient explanation of the abstract phenomenon. It is easy for the arithmetician to make a key to the problems that he has devised to suit himself. An immediate and habitual confusion of the kind spoken of is insanity; and the hypochondriac is tracked by the black dog of his own mind. Disease itself is, of course, in one sense natural, as being the result of natural causes; but if we assume health as the mean representing the normal poise of all the mental faculties, we must be content to call hypochondria subternatural, because the tone of the instrument is lowered, and to designate as supernatural only those ecstasies in which the mind, under intense but not unhealthy excitement, is snatched sometimes above itself, as in poets and other persons of imaginative temperament. In poets this liability to be possessed by the creations of their own

brains is limited and proportioned by the artistic sense, and the imagination thus truly becomes the shaping faculty, while in less regulated or coarser organizations it dwells forever in the *Nifelheim* of phantasmagoria and dream, a thaumaturge half cheat, half dupe. What Mr. Tylor has to say on this matter is ingenious and full of valuable suggestion, and to a certain extent solves our difficulties. Nightmare, for example, will explain the testimony of witnesses in trials for witchcraft, that they had been hag-ridden by the accused. But to prove the possibility, nay, the probability, of this confusion of objective with subjective is not enough. It accounts very well for such apparitions as those which appeared to Dion, to Brutus, and to Curtius Rufus. In such cases the imagination is undoubtedly its own *doppel-gänger*, and sees nothing more than the projection of its own deceit. But I am puzzled, I confess, to explain the appearance of the *first* ghost, especially among men who thought death to be the end-all here below. The thing once conceived of, it is easy, on Mr. Tylor's theory, to account for all after the first. If it was originally believed that only the spirits of those who had died violent deaths were permitted to wander,* the conscience of a remorseful murderer may have been haunted by the memory of his victim, till the imagination, infected in its turn, gave outward reality to the image on the inward eye. After putting to death Boëtius and Symmachus, it is said that Theodoric saw in the head of a fish served at his dinner the face of Symmachus, grinning horribly and with flaming eyes, whereupon he took to his bed and died soon after in great agony of mind. It is not safe, perhaps, to believe all that is reported of an Arian; but, supposing the story to be true, there is but a short step from such a delusion of the senses to the complete ghost of popular legend. But, in some of the most trustworthy stories of apparitions, they have shown themselves not only to persons who had done them no wrong in the flesh, but also to such as had never even known them. The *eidolon* of James Haddock appeared to a man named Taverner, that he might interest himself in recovering a piece of land unjustly kept from the dead man's infant son. If we may trust Defoe, Bishop

* Lucian, in his "Liars," puts this opinion into the mouth of Arignotus.

Jeremy Taylor twice examined Taverner, and was convinced of the truth of his story. In this case, Taverner had formerly known Haddock. But the apparition of an old gentleman which entered the learned Dr. Scott's study, and directed him where to find a missing deed needful in settling what had lately been its estate in the West of England, chose for its attorney in the business an entire stranger, who had never even seen its original in the flesh.

Whatever its origin, a belief in spirits seems to have been common to all the nations of the ancient world who have left us any record of themselves. Ghosts began to walk early, and are walking still, in spite of the shrill cock-crow of *wir haben ja aufgeklärt*. Even the ghost in chains, which one would naturally take to be a fashion peculiar to convicts escaped from purgatory, is older than the belief in that reforming penitentiary. The younger Pliny tells a very good story to this effect: "There was at Athens a large and spacious house which lay under the disrepute of being haunted. In the dead of the night a noise resembling the clashing of iron was frequently heard, which, if you listened more attentively, sounded like the rattling of chains; at first it seemed at a distance, but approached nearer by degrees; immediately afterward a spectre appeared, in the form of an old man, extremely meagre and ghastly, with a long beard and dishevelled hair, rattling the chains on his feet and hands. . . . By this means the house was at last deserted, being judged by everybody to be absolutely uninhabitable; so that it was now entirely abandoned to the ghost. However, in hopes that some tenant might be found who was ignorant of this great calamity which attended it, a bill was put up giving notice that it was either to be let or sold. It happened that the philosopher Athenodorus came to Athens at this time, and reading the bill, inquired the price. The extraordinary cheapness raised his suspicion; nevertheless, when he heard the whole story, he was so far from being discouraged that he was more strongly inclined to hire it, and, in short, actually did so. When it grew towards evening, he ordered a couch to be prepared for him in the fore part of the house, and, after calling for a light, together with his pen and tablets, he directed all his people to retire. But that his mind

might not, for want of employment, be open to the vain terrors of imaginary noises and spirits, he applied himself to writing with the utmost attention. The first part of the night passed with usual silence, when at length the chains began to rattle; however, he neither lifted up his eyes nor laid down his pen, but diverted his observation by pursuing his studies with greater earnestness. The noise increased, and advanced nearer, till it seemed at the door, and at last in the chamber. He looked up and saw the ghost exactly in the manner it had been described to him; it stood before him, beckoning with the finger. Athenodorus made a sign with his hand that it should wait a little, and threw his eyes again upon his papers; but the ghost still rattling his chains in his ears, he looked up and saw him beckoning as before. Upon this he immediately arose, and with the light in his hand followed it. The ghost slowly stalked along, as if encumbered with his chains, and, turning into the area of the house, suddenly vanished. Athenodorus, being thus deserted, made a mark with some grass and leaves where the spirit left him. The next day he gave information of this to the magistrates, and advised them to order that spot to be dug up. This was accordingly done, and the skeleton of a man in chains was there found; for the body, having lain a considerable time in the ground, was putrefied and mouldered away from the fetters. The bones, being collected together, were publicly buried, and thus, after the ghost was appeased by the proper ceremonies, the house was haunted no more.”* This story has such a modern air as to be absolutely disheartening. Are ghosts, then, as incapable of invention as dramatic authors? But the demeanor of Athenodorus has the grand air of the classical period, of one *qui connaît son monde*, and feels the superiority of a living philosopher to a dead Philistine. How far above all modern armament is his prophylactic against his insubstantial fellow-lodger! Now-a-days men take pistols into haunted houses. Sterne, and after him Novalis, discovered that gunpowder made all men equally tall, but Athenodorus had found out that pen and ink establish a superiority in spiritual stature. As men of this world, we feel our dignity exalted by his keeping

* Pliny's Letters, vii. 27. Melmoth's translation.

an ambassador from the other waiting till he had finished his paragraph. Never surely did authorship appear to greater advantage. Athenodorus seems to have been of Hamlet's mind :

"I do not set my life at a pin's fee,
And, for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal, as itself?" *

A superstition, as its name imports, is something that has been left to stand over, like unfinished business, from one session of the world's *witenagemot* to the next. The vulgar receive it implicitly on the principle of *omne ignotum pro possibili*, a theory acted on by a much larger number than is commonly supposed, and even the enlightened are too apt to consider it, if not proved, at least rendered probable by the hearsay evidence of popular experience. Particular superstitions are sometimes the embodiment by popular imagination of ideas that were at first mere poetic figments, but more commonly the degraded and distorted relics of religious beliefs. Dethroned gods, outlawed by the new dynasty, haunted the borders of their old dominions, lurking in forests and mountains, and venturing to show themselves only after nightfall. Grimm and others have detected old divinities skulking about in strange disguises, and living from hand to mouth on the charity of Gammer Grethel and Mère l'Oie. Cast out from Olympus and Asgard, they were thankful for the hospitality of the chimney-corner, and kept soul and body together by an illicit traffic between this world and the other. While Schiller was lamenting the gods of Greece, some of them were nearer neighbors to him than he dreamed ; and Heine had the wit to turn them to delightful account,

* Something like this is the speech of Don Juan, after the statue of Don Gonzales has gone out :

"Pero todas son ideas
Que da a la imaginacion
El temor ; y temer muertos
Es muy villano temor.
Que si un cuerpo noble, vivo,
Con potencias y razon
Y con alma no se tema,
¿ Quien cuerpos muertos temió ? "

El Burlador de Sevilla, A. iii. s. 15.

showing himself, perhaps, the wiser of the two in saving what he could from the shipwreck of the past for present use on this prosaic Juan Fernandez of a scientific age, instead of sitting down to bewail it. To make the pagan divinities hateful, they were stigmatized as cacodæmons; and as the human mind finds a pleasure in analogy and system, an infernal hierarchy gradually shaped itself as the convenient antipodes and counterpoise of the celestial one. Perhaps at the bottom of it all there was a kind of unconscious manicheism, and Satan, as Prince of Darkness, or of the Powers of the Air, became at last a sovereign, with his great feudatories and countless vassals, capable of maintaining a not unequal contest with the King of Heaven. He was supposed to have a certain power of bestowing earthly prosperity, but he was really, after all, nothing better than a James II. at St. Germain's, who could make Dukes of Perth and confer titular fiefs and garters as much as he liked, without the unpleasant necessity of providing any substance behind his shadows. That there should have been so much loyalty to him, under these disheartening circumstances, seems to me, on the whole, creditable to poor human nature. In this case it is due, at least in part, to that instinct of the poor among the races of the North, where there was a long winter, and too often a scanty harvest,—and the poor have been always and everywhere a majority,—which made a deity of Wish. The *Acheronta-movebo* impulse must have been pardonably strong in old women starving with cold and hunger, and fathers with large families and a small winter stock of provision. Especially in the transition period from the old religion to the new, the temptation must have been great to try one's luck with the discrowned dynasty, when the intruder was deaf and blind to claims that seemed just enough, so long as it was still believed that God personally interfered in the affairs of men. On his death-bed, says Piers Plowman,

“ The poore dare plede and prove by reson
To have allowance of his lord ; by the law he it claimeth ;

Thanne may beggaris as beestes after boote waiten
That al hir lif han lyved in langour and in defaute
But God sente hem som tyme som manere joye,
Outher here or ellis where, kynde wolde it nevere.”

He utters the common feeling when he says that it were against nature. But when a man has his choice between here and elsewhere, it may be feared that the other world will seem too desperately far away to be waited for when hungry ruin has him in the wind, and the chance on earth is so temptingly near. Hence the notion of a transfer of allegiance from God to Satan, sometimes by a written compact, sometimes with the ceremony by which homage is done to a feudal superior.

Most of the practices of witchcraft — such as the power to raise storms, to destroy cattle, to assume the shape of beasts by the use of certain ointments, to induce deadly maladies in men by waxen images, or love by means of charms and philtres — were inheritances from ancient paganism. But the theory of a compact was the product of later times, the result, no doubt, of the efforts of the clergy to inspire a horror of any lapse into heathenish rites by making devils of all the old gods. Christianity may be said to have invented the soul as an individual entity to be saved or lost; and thus grosser wits were led to conceive of it as a piece of property that could be transferred by deed of gift or sale, duly signed, sealed, and witnessed. The earliest legend of the kind is that of Theophilus, chancellor of the church of Adana in Cilicia, some time during the sixth century. It is said to have been first written by Eutychianus, who had been a pupil of Theophilus, and who tells the story partly as an eyewitness, partly from the narration of his master. The nun Hroswitha first treated it dramatically in the latter half of the tenth century. Some four hundred years later Rutebeuf made it the theme of a French miracle-play. His treatment of it is not without a certain poetic merit. Theophilus has been deprived by his bishop of a lucrative office. In his despair he meets with Saladin, *qui parloit au deable quant il voloit*. Saladin tempts him to deny God and devote himself to the Devil, who, in return, will give him back all his old prosperity and more. He at last consents, signs and seals the contract required, and is restored to his old place by the bishop. But now remorse and terror come upon him; he calls on the Virgin, who, after some demur, compels Satan to bring back his deed from the infernal muniment-chest (which must have been fire-proof beyond any skill of our modern safe-mak-

ers), and the bishop, having read it aloud to the awe-stricken congregation, Theophilus becomes his own man again. In this play, the theory of the devilish compact is already complete in all its particulars. The paper must be signed with the blood of the grantor, who does feudal homage (*or joing tes mains, et si devien mes hom*), and engages to eschew good and do evil all the days of his life. The Devil, however, does not imprint any stigma upon his new vassal, as in the later stories of witch-compacts. The following passage from the opening speech of Theophilus will illustrate the conception to which I have alluded of God as a liege lord against whom one might seek revenge on sufficient provocation, — and the only revenge possible was to rob him of a subject by going over to the great Suzerain, his deadly foe : —

“N'est riens que por avoir ne face ;
Ne pris riens Dieu et sa manace.
Irai me je noier ou pendre ?
Ie ne m'en puis pas à Dieu prendre,
C'on ne puet à lui avenir.

Mès il s'est en si haut lien mis,
Por eschiver ses anemis
C'on n'i puet trere ni lancier.
Se or pooie à lui tancier,
Et combattre et escrimir,
La char li feroie fremir.
Or est là sus en son solaz,
Laz ! chetis ! et je sui ès laz
De Povreté et de Soufreté.”*

During the Middle Ages the story became a favorite topic with preachers, while carvings and painted windows tended still further to popularize it, and to render men's minds familiar with the idea which makes the nexus of its plot. The plastic hands of Calderon shaped it into a dramatic poem not surpassed, perhaps hardly equalled, in subtle imaginative quality by any other of modern times.

In proportion as a belief in the possibility of this damnable merchandising with hell became general, accusations of it grew more numerous. Among others, the memory of Pope

* Théâtre Français au Moyen Age (Monmerqué et Michel), pp. 139, 140.

Sylvester II. was blackened with the charge of having thus bargained away his soul. All learning fell under suspicion, till at length the very grammar itself (the last volume in the world, one would say, to conjure with) gave to English the word *gramary* (enchantment), and in French became a book of magic, under the alias of *Grimoire*. It is not at all unlikely that, in an age when the boundary between actual and possible was not very well defined, there were scholars who made experiments in this direction, and signed contracts, though they never had a chance to complete their bargain by an actual delivery. I do not recall any case of witchcraft in which such a document was produced in court as evidence against the accused. Such a one, it is true, was ascribed to Grandier, but was not brought forward at his trial. It should seem that Grandier had been shrewd enough to take a bond to secure the fulfilment of the contract on the other side; for we have the document in fac-simile, signed and sealed by Lucifer, Beelzebub, Satan, Elimi, Leviathan, and Astaroth, duly witnessed by Baalberith, Secretary of the Grand Council of Demons. Fancy the competition such a state paper as this would arouse at a sale of autographs! Commonly no security appears to have been given by the other party to these arrangements but the bare word of the Devil, which was considered, no doubt, every whit as good as his bond. In most cases, indeed, he was the loser, and showed a want of capacity for affairs equal to that of an average giant of romance. Never was comedy acted over and over with such sameness of repetition as "The Devil is an Ass." In popular legend he is made the victim of some equivocation so gross that any court of equity would have ruled in his favor. On the other hand, if the story had been dressed up by some mediæval Tract Society, the Virgin appears in person at the right moment *ex machina*, and compels him to give up the property he had honestly paid for. One is tempted to ask, Were there no attorneys, then, in the place he came from, of whom he might have taken advice beforehand? On the whole, he had rather hard measure, and it is a wonder he did not throw up the business in disgust. Sometimes, however, he was more lucky, as with the unhappy Dr. Faust; and even so lately as 1695, he came in the shape of a "tall fellow

with black beard and periwig, respectable looking and well dressed," about two o'clock in the afternoon, to fly away with the Maréchal de Luxembourg, which, on the stroke of five, he punctually did as per contract, taking with him the window and its stone framing into the bargain. The clothes and wig of the involuntary aeronaut were, in the handsomest manner, left upon the bed, as not included in the bill of sale. In this case also we have a copy of the articles of agreement, twenty-eight in number, by the last of which the Maréchal renounces God and devotes himself to the enemy. This clause, sometimes the only one, always the most important in such compacts, seems to show that they first took shape in the imagination, while the struggle between Paganism and Christianity was still going on. As the converted heathen was made to renounce his false gods, none the less real for being false, so the renegade Christian must forswear the true Deity. It is very likely, however, that the whole thing may be more modern than the assumed date of Theophilus would imply, and if so, the idea of feudal allegiance gave the first hint, as it certainly modified the particulars, of the ceremonial.

This notion of a personal and private treaty with the Evil One has something of dignity about it that has made it perennially attractive to the most imaginative minds. It rather flatters than mocks our feeling of the dignity of man. As we come down to the vulgar parody of it in the confessions of wretched old women on the rack, our pity and indignation are mingled with disgust. One of the most particular of these confessions is that of Abel de la Rue, convicted in 1584. The accused was a novice in the Franciscan Convent at Meaux. Having been punished by the master of the novices for stealing some apples and nuts in the convent garden, the Devil appeared to him in the shape of a black dog, promising him his protection, and advising him to leave the convent. Not long after going into the sacristy of the convent, he saw a large volume fastened by a chain, and further secured by bars of iron. The name of this book was *Grimoire*. Thrusting his hands through the bars, he contrived to open it, and having read a sentence (which Bodin carefully suppresses), there suddenly appeared to him a man of middle stature, with a pale and very frightful

countenance, clad in a long black robe of the Italian fashion, and with faces of men like his own on his breast and knees. As for his feet they were like those of cows. He could not have been the most agreeable of companions, *ayant le corps et haleine puante*. This man told him not to be afraid, to take off his habit, to put faith in him, and he would give him whatever he asked. Then laying hold of him below the arms, the unknown transported him under the gallows of Meaux, and then said to him with a trembling and broken voice, and having a visage as pale as that of a man who has been hanged, and a very stinking breath, that he should fear nothing, but have entire confidence in him, that he should never want for anything, that his own name was Maître Rigoux, and that he would like to be his master; to which De la Rue made answer that he would do whatever he commanded, and that he wished to be gone from the Franciscans. Thereupon Rigoux disappeared, but returning between seven and eight in the evening, took him round the waist and carried him back to the sacristy, promising to come again for him the next day. This he accordingly did, and told De la Rue to take off his habit, get him gone from the convent, and meet him near a great tree on the high-road from Meaux to Vaulx-Courtois. Rigoux met him there and took him to a certain Maître Pierre, who, after a few words exchanged in an undertone with Rigoux, sent De la Rue to the stable, after his return whence he saw no more of Rigoux. Thereupon Pierre and his wife made him good cheer, telling him that for the love of Maître Rigoux they would treat him well, and that he must obey the said Rigoux, which he promised to do. About two months after, Maître Pierre, who commonly took him to the fields to watch cattle, said to him there that they must go to the Assembly, because he (Pierre) was out of powders, to which he made answer that he was willing. Three days later, about Christmas eve, 1575, Pierre having sent his wife to sleep out of the house, set a long branch of broom in the chimney-corner, and bade De la Rue go to bed, but not to sleep. About eleven, they heard a great noise as of an impetuous wind and thunder in the chimney; which hearing, Maître Pierre told him to dress himself, for it was time to be gone. Then Pierre took some grease from a little box and

anointed himself under the arm-pits, and De la Rue on the palms of his hands, which incontinently felt as if on fire, and the said grease stank like a cat three weeks or a month dead. Then, Pierre and he bestriding the branch, Maître Rigoux took it by the butt and drew it up chimney as if the wind had lifted them. And, the night being dark, he saw suddenly a torch before them lighting them, and Maître Rigoux was gone unless he had changed himself into the said torch. Arrived at a grassy place some five leagues from Vaulx-Courtois, they found a company of some sixty people of all ages, none of whom he knew, except a certain Pierre of Dampmartin and an old woman who was executed, as he had heard, about five years ago for sorcery at Lagny. Then suddenly he noticed that all (except Rigoux, who was clad as before) were dressed in linen, though they had not changed their clothes. Then, at command of the eldest among them, who seemed about eighty, with a white beard and almost wholly bald, each swept the place in front of himself with his broom. Thereupon Rigoux changed into a great he-goat, black and stinking, around whom they all danced backward with their faces outward and their backs towards the goat. They danced about half an hour, and then his master told him they must adore the goat who was the Devil, *et ce fait et dict, veit que ledict Bouc courba ses deux pieds de devant et leua son cul en haut, et lors que certaines menues graines grosses comme testes d'espingles, qui se conuertissoient en poudres fort puantes, sentant le soulfhre et poudre à canon et chair puant mesleés ensemble seroient tombeés sur plusieurs drappeaux en sept doubles.* Then the oldest, and so the rest in order, went forward on their knees and gathered up their cloths with the powders, but first each *se seroit incliné vers le Diable et iceluy baisé en la partie honteuse de son corps.* They went home on their broom, lighted as before. De la Rue confessed also that he was at another assembly on the eve of St. John Baptist. With the powders they could cause the death of men against whom they had a spite, or their cattle. Rigoux before long began to tempt him to drown himself, and, though he lay down, yet rolled him some distance towards the river. It is plain that the poor fellow was mad or half-witted or both. And yet Bodin, the author of the *De Republica*, reckoned one of the

ablest books of that age, believed all this filthy nonsense, and prefixes it to his *Démonomanie*, as proof conclusive of the existence of sorcerers.

This was in 1587. Just a century later, Glanvil, one of the most eminent men of his day, and Henry More, the Platonist, whose memory is still dear to the lovers of an imaginative mysticism, were perfectly satisfied with evidence like that which follows. Elizabeth Styles confessed, in 1664, “that the Devil about ten years since appeared to her in the shape of a handsome Man, and after of a black Dog. That he promised her Money, and that she should live gallantly, and have the pleasure of the World for twelve years, if she would with her Blood sign his Paper, which was to give her soul to him and observe his Laws and that he might suck her Blood. This after Four Solicitations, the Examinant promised him to do. Upon which he pricked the fourth Finger of her right hand, between the middle and upper Joynt (where the Sign at the Examination remained) and with a Drop or two of her Blood, she signed the Paper with an O. Upon this the Devil gave her sixpence and vanished with the Paper. That since he hath appeared to her in the Shape of a *Man*, and did so on *Wednesday* seven-night past, but more usually he appears in the Likeness of a *Dog*, and *Cat*, and a *Fly* like a Millar, in which last he usually sucks in the Poll about four of the Clock in the Morning, and did so *Jan.* 27, and that it is pain to her to be so suckt. That when she hath a desire to do harm she calls the Spirit by the name of *Robin*, to whom, when he appeareth, she useth these words, *O Sathan, give me my purpose*. She then tells him what she would have done. And that he should so appear to her was part of her Contract with him.” The Devil in this case appeared as a black (dark-complexioned) man “in black clothes, with a little band,” — a very clerical-looking personage. “Before they are carried to their meetings they anoint their Foreheads and Hand-Wrists with an Oyl the Spirit brings them (which smells raw) and then they are carried in a very short time, using these words as they pass, *Thout, tout a tout, throughout and about*. And when they go off from their Meetings they say, *Rentum, Tormentum*. That at every meeting before the Spirit vanisheth away, he appoints the next meeting place and time, and at his

departure there is a foul smell. At their meeting they have usually Wine or good Beer, Cakes, Meat or the like. They eat and drink really when they meet, in their Bodies, dance also and have some Musick. The Man in black sits at the higher end, and *Anne Bishop* usually next him. He useth some words before meat, and none after ; his Voice is audible, but very low. The Man in black sometimes plays on a Pipe or Cittern, and the Company dance. At last the Devil vanisheth, and all are carried to their several homes in a short space. At their parting they say, *A Boy ! merry meet, merry part !*” *Alice Duke* confessed “ that *Anne Bishop* persuaded her to go with her into the Churchyard in the Night-time, and being come thither, to go backward round the Church, which they did three times. In their first round they met a Man in black Cloths who went round the second time with them ; and then they met a thing in the Shape of a great black Toad which leapt up against the Examinant’s Apron. In their third round they met somewhat in the shape of a Rat, which vanished away.” She also received sixpence from the Devil, and “ her Familiar did commonly suck her right Breast about seven at night in the shape of a little Cat of a dunnish Colour, which is as Smooth as a Want [mole], and when she is sucked, she is in a kind of Trance.” Poor *Christian Green* got only fourpence half-penny for her soul, but her bargain was made some years later than that of the others, and quotations, as the stock-brokers would say, ranged lower. Her familiar took the shape of a hedgehog. *Julian Cox* confessed that “ she had been often tempted by the Devil to be a Witch, but never consented. That one Evening she walkt about a Mile from her own House and there came riding towards her three Persons upon three Broomstaves, born up about a yard and a half from the ground. Two of them she formerly knew, which was a Witch and a Wizzard that were hanged for Witchcraft several years before. The third person she knew not. He came in the shape of a black Man, and tempted her to give him her Soul, or to that effect, and to express it by pricking her Finger and giving her name in her Blood in token of it.” On her trial Judge *Archer* told the jury, “ he had heard that a Witch could not repeat that Petition in the Lord’s Prayer, viz. *And lead us not into*

temptation, and having this occasion, he would try the Experiment." The jury "were not in the least measure to guide their Verdict according to it, because it was not legal Evidence." Accordingly it was found that the poor old trot could say only, *Lead us into temptation*, or *Lead us not into no temptation*. Probably she used the latter form first, and, finding she had blundered, corrected herself by leaving out both the negatives. The old English double negation seems never to have been heard of by the court. Janet Douglass, a pretended dumb girl, by whose contrivance five persons had been burned at Paisley, in 1677, for having caused the sickness of Sir George Maxwell by means of waxen and other images, having recovered her speech shortly after, declared that she "had some smattering knowledge of the Lord's prayer, which she had heard the witches repeat, it seems, by her vision, in the presence of the Devil; and, at his desire, which they observed, they added to the word *art* the letter *w*, which made it run, 'Our Father which wart in heaven,' by which means the Devil made the application of the prayer to himself." She also showed on the arm of a woman named Campbell "an *invisible* mark which she had gotten from the Devil." The wife of one Barton confessed that she had engaged "in the Devil's service. She renounced her baptism, and did prostrate her body to the foul spirit, and received his mark, and got a new name from him, and was called *Margaratus*. She was asked if she ever had any pleasure in his company? 'Never much,' says she, 'but one night going to a dancing upon Pentland Hills, in the likeness of a rough tanny [tawny] dog, playing on a pair of pipes; the spring he played,' says she, 'was *The silly bit chicken, gar cast it a pickle, and it will grow meikle.*'" * In 1670, near seventy of both sexes, among them fifteen children were executed for witchcraft at the village of Mohra in Sweden. Thirty-six children between the ages of nine and sixteen were sentenced to be scourged with rods on the palm of their hands, once a week for a year. The evidence in this case against the accused seems to have been mostly that of children. "Being asked

* "There sat Auld Nick in shape o' beast,
A towzy tyke, black, grim, an' large,
To gie them music was his charge."

whether they were sure that they were at any time carried away by the Devil, they all declared they were, begging of the Commissioners that they might be freed from that intolerable slavery." They "used to go to a Gravel pit which lay hardby a Cross-way and there they put on a vest over their heads, and then danced round, and after ran to the Cross-way and called the Devil thrice, first with a still Voice, the second time somewhat louder, and the third time very loud, with these words, *Antecessour, come and carry us to Blockula.* Whereupon immediately he used to appear, but in different Habits; but for the most part they saw him in a gray Coat and red and blue Stockings. He had a red Beard, a highcrowned Hat, with linnen of divers Colours wrapt about it, and long Garters upon his Stockings." "They must procure some Scrapings of Altars and Filings of Church-Clocks [bells], and he gives them a Horn with some Salve in it wherewith they do anoint themselves." "Being asked whether they were sure of a real personal Transportation, and whether they were awake when it was done, they all answered in the Affirmative, and that the Devil sometimes laid something down in the Place that was very like them. But one of them confessed that he did only take away her Strength, and her Body lay still upon the Ground. Yet sometimes he took even her Body with him." "Till of late they never had that power to carry away Children, but only this year and the last, and the Devil did at this time force them to it. That heretofore it was sufficient to carry but one of their Children or a Stranger's Child, which yet happened seldom, but now he did plague them and whip them if they did not procure him Children, insomuch that they had no peace or quiet for him; and whereas formerly one Journey a Week would serve their turn from their own town to the place aforesaid, now they were forced to run to other Towns and Places for Children, and that they brought with them some fifteen, some sixteen Children every night. For their journey they made use of all sorts of Instruments, of Beasts, of Men, of Spits, and Posts, according as they had opportunity. If they do ride upon Goats and have many Children with them," they have a way of lengthening the goat with a spit, "and then are anointed with the aforesaid Ointment. A little Girl of Elfdale confessed, That,

naming the name of JESUS, as she was carried away, she fell suddenly upon the Ground and got a great hole in her Side, which the Devil presently healed up again. The first thing they must do at Blockula was that they must deny all and devote themselves Body and Soul to the Devil, and promise to serve him faithfully, and confirm all this with an Oath. Hereupon they cut their Fingers, and with their Bloud writ their Name in his Book. He caused them to be baptized by such Priests as he had there and made them confirm their Baptism with dreadful Oaths and Imprecations. Hereupon the Devil gave them a Purse, wherein their filings of Clocks [bells], with a Stone tied to it, which they threw into the Water, and then they were forced to speak these words: *As these filings of the Clock do never return to the Clock from which they are taken, so may my soul never return to Heaven.* The diet they did use to have there was Broth with Colworts and Bacon in it, Oatmeal-Bread spread with Butter, Milk, and Cheese. Sometimes it tasted very well, sometimes very ill. After Meals, they went to Dancing, and in the mean while Swore and Cursed most dreadfully, and afterward went to fighting one with another. The Devil had Sons and Daughters by them, which he did marry together, and they did couple and brought forth Toads and Serpents. If he hath a mind to be merry with them, he lets them all ride upon Spits before him, takes afterwards the Spits and beats them black and blue, and then laughs at them. They had seen sometimes a very great Devil like a Dragon, with fire about him and bound with an Iron Chain, and the Devil that converses with them tells them that, if they confess anything, he will let that great Devil loose upon them, whereby all *Sweedland* shall come into great danger. The Devil taught them to milk, which was in this wise: they used to stick a knife in the Wall and hang a kind of Label on it, which they drew and stroaked, and as long as this lasted the Persons that they had Power over were miserably plagued, and the Beasts were milked that way till sometimes they died of it. The minister of Elfdale declared that one Night these Witches were to his thinking upon the crown of his Head and that from thence he had had a long-continued Pain of the Head. One of the Witches confessed, too, that the Devil had sent her to torment

the Minister, and that she was ordered to use a Nail and strike it into his Head, but it would not enter very deep. They confessed also that the Devil gives them a Beast about the bigness and shape of a young Cat, which they call a *Carrier*, and that he gives them a Bird too as big as a Raven, but white. And these two Creatures they can send anywhere, and wherever they come they take away all sorts of Victuals they can get. What the Bird brings they may keep for themselves ; but what the Carrier brings they must reserve for the Devil. The Lords Commissioners were indeed very earnest and took great Pains to persuade them to show some of their Tricks, but to no Purpose ; for they did all unanimously confess, that, since they had confessed all, they found that all their Witchcraft was gone, and that the Devil at this time appeared to them very terrible with Claws on his Hands and Feet, and with Horns on his Head and a long Tail behind." At Blockula "the Devil had a Church, such another as in the town of Mohra. When the Commissioners were coming, he told the Witches they should not fear them, for he would certainly kill them all. And they confessed that some of them had attempted to murmur the Commissioners, but had not been able to effect it."

In these confessions we find included nearly all the particulars of the popular belief concerning witchcraft, and see the gradual degradation of the once superb Lucifer to the vulgar scarecrow with horns and tail. "The Prince of Darkness *was* a gentleman." From him who had not lost all his original brightness, to this dirty fellow who leaves a stench, sometimes of brimstone, behind him, the descent is a long one. For the dispersion of this foul odor Dr. Henry More gives an odd reason. "The Devil also, as in other stories, leaving an ill smell behind him, seems to imply the reality of the business, those adscititious particles he held together in his visible vehicle being loosened at his vanishing and so offending the nostrils by their floating and diffusing themselves in the open Air." In all the stories vestiges of paganism are not indistinct. The three principal witch gatherings of the year were held on the days of great pagan festivals, which were afterwards adopted by the Church. Maury supposes the witches' Sabbath to be derived from the rites of Bacchus Sabazius, and accounts in this way

for the Devil's taking the shape of a he-goat. But the name was more likely to be given from hatred of the Jews, and the goat may have a much less remote origin. Bodin assumes the identity of the Devil with Pan, and in the popular mythology both of Kelts and Teutons there were certain hairy wood-demons called by the former *Dus* and by the latter *Scrat*. Our common names of *Deuse* and *Old Scratch* are plainly derived from these, and possibly *Old Harry* is a corruption of *Old Hairy*. By Latinization they became Satyrs. Here, at any rate, is the source of the cloven hoof. The belief in the Devil's appearing to his worshippers as a goat is very old. Possibly the fact that this animal was sacred to Thor, the god of thunder, may explain it. Certain it is that the traditions of Vulcan, Thor, and Wayland * converged at last in Satan. Like Vulcan, he was hurled from Heaven, and like him he still limps across the stage in Mephistopheles, though without knowing why. In Germany, he has a horse's and not a cloven foot,† because the horse was a frequent pagan sacrifice, and therefore associated with devil-worship under the new dispensation. Hence the horror of hippophagism which some French gastronomes are striving to overcome. Everybody who has read "Tom Brown," or Wordsworth's Sonnet on a German stove, remembers the Saxon horse sacred to Woden. The raven was also his peculiar bird, and Grimm is inclined to think this the reason why the witch's familiar appears so often in that shape. It is true that our *Old Nick* is derived from *Nikkar*, one of the titles of that divinity, but the association of the Evil One with the raven is older, and most probably owing to the ill-omened character of the bird itself. Already in the apocryphal gospel of the "Infancy," the demoniac Son of the Chief Priest puts on his head one of the swaddling-clothes of Christ which Mary has hung out to dry, and forthwith "the devils began to come out of his mouth and to fly away as *crows* and serpents."

It will be noticed that the witches underwent a form of baptism. As the system gradually perfected itself among the least imaginative of men, as the superstitious are apt to be, they could

* Hence, perhaps, the name Valant applied to the Devil, about the origin of which Grimm is in doubt.

† One foot of the Greek Empusa was an ass's hoof.

do nothing better than describe Satan's world as in all respects the reverse of that which had been conceived by the orthodox intellect as Divine. Have you an illustrated Bible of the last century? Very good. Turn it upside down, and you find the prints on the whole about as near nature as ever, and yet pretending to be something new by a simple device that saves the fancy a good deal of trouble. For, while it is true that the poetic fancy plays, yet the faculty which goes by that pseudonym in prosaic minds (and it was by such that the details of this Satanic commerce were pieced together) is hard put to it for invention, and only too thankful for any labor-saving contrivance whatsoever. Accordingly, all it need take the trouble to do was to reverse the ideas of sacred things already engraved on its surface, and behold, a kingdom of hell with all the merit and none of the difficulty of originality! "Uti olim Deus populo suo Hierosolymis Synagogas erexit ut in iis ignarus legis divinæ populus erudiretur, voluntatemque Dei placitam ex verbo in iis prædicato hauriret; ita et Diabolus in omnibus omnino suis actionibus simiam Dei agens, gregi suo acherontico conventus et synagogas, quas satanica sabbata vocant, indicit. . . . Atque de hisce Conventibus et Synagogis Lamiarum nullus Antorum quos quidem evolvi, imo nec ipse Lamiarum Patronus [here he glances at Wierus] scilicet ne dubiolum quidem movit. Adeo ut tuto affirmari liceat conventus a diabolo certo institui. Quos vel ipse, tanquam præses collegii, vel per dæmonem, qui ad cujuslibet sagæ custodiam constitutus est, . . . vel per alios Magos aut sagas per unum aut duos dies antequam fiat congregatio denunciât. . . . Loci in quibus solent a dæmone cœtus et conventicula malefica institui plerumque sunt sylvestres, occulti, subterranei, et ab hominum conversatione remoti. . . . Evocatæ hoc modo et tempore Lamiaë, . . . dæmon illis persuadet eas non posse conventiculis interesse nisi nudum corpus unguento ex corpuseculis infantum ante baptismum necatorum præparato illinant, idque propterea solum illis persuadet ut ad quam plurimas infantum insontium cædes eas alliciat. . . . Unctionis ritu peracto, abiturientes, ne forte a maritis in lectis desiderantur, vel per incantationem somnum, aurem nimirum vellicando dextra manu prius prædicto unguine illita, conciliant maritis ex quo non facile possunt

excitari; vel dæmones personas quasdam dormientibus adumbrant, quas, si contingeret expergisci, suas uxores esse putarent; vel interea alius dæmon in forma succubi ad latus maritorum adjungitur qui loco uxoris est. . . . Et ita sine omni remora insidentes baculo, furcæ, scopis, aut arundini vel tauro, equo, sui, hirco, aut cani, *quorum omnium exempla prodidit Remig.* L. I. c. 14, develuntur a dæmone ad loca destinata. . . . Ibi dæmon præses conventus in solio sedet magnifico, forma terrificæ, ut plurimum hirci vel canis. Ad quem advenientes viri juxta ac mulieres accedunt reverentiæ exhibendæ et adorandi gratia, non tamen uno eodemque modo. Interdum complicatis genibus supplices; interdum obverso incedentes tergo et modo retrogrado, in oppositum directo illi reverentiæ quam nos præstare solemus. In signum homagii (sit honor castis auribus) Principem suum hircum in [obscænissimo quodam corporis loco] summa cum reverentia sacrilego ore osculantur. Quo facto, sacrificia dæmoni faciunt multis modis. Sæpe liberos suos ipsi offerunt. Sæpe comunione sumpta benedictam hostiam in ore asservatam et extractam (horreo dicere) dæmoni oblatam coram eo pede conculcant. His et similibus flagitiis et abominationibus execrandis commissis, incipiunt mensis assidere et convivari de cibis insipidis, insulsis,* furtivis, quos dæmon suppeditat, vel quos singulæ attulere, inderdum tripudiant ante convivium, interdum post illud. . . . Nec mensæ sua deest benedictio cœtu hoc digna, verbis constans plane blasphemis quibus ipsum Beelzebub et creatorem et datorem et conservatorem omnium profitentur. Eadem sententia est gratiarum actionis. Post convivium, dorsis invicem obversis . . . choreas ducere et cantare fescenninos in honorem dæmonis obscænissimos, vel ad tympanum fistulamve sedentis alicujus in bifida arbore saltare . . . tum suis amasüs dæmonibus fœdissime commisceri. Ultimo pulveribus (quos aliqui scribunt esse cineres hirci illis quem dæmon assumpserat et quem adorant subito coram illius flamma absumpti) vel venenis aliis acceptis, sæpe etiam cuique indicto nocendi penso, et pronunciato Pseudothei dæmonis decreto, ULCISCAMINI VOS, ALIOQUI MORIEMINI. Duabus aut tribus horis in hisce ludis exactis circa Gallicinium dæmon

* Salt was forbidden at these witch-feasts.

convivas suas dimittit.”* Sometimes they were baptized anew. Sometimes they renounced the Virgin, whom they called in their rites *extensam mulierem*. If the Ave Mary bell should ring while the demon is conveying home his witch, he lets her drop. In the confession of Agnes Simpson the meeting place was North Berwick Kirk. “The Devil started up himself in the pulpit, like a meikle black man, and calling the row [roll] every one answered, *Here*. At his command they opened up three graves and cutted off from the dead corpses the joints of their fingers, toes, and nose, and parted them amongst them, and the said Agnes Simpson got for her part a winding-sheet and two joints. The Devil commanded them to keep the joints upon them while [till] they were dry, and then to make a powder of them to do evil withal.” This confession is sadly memorable, for it was made before James I., then king of Scots, and is said to have convinced him of the reality of witchcraft. Hence the act passed in the first year of his reign in England, and not repealed till 1736, under which, perhaps in consequence of which, so many suffered.

The notion of these witch-gatherings was first suggested, there can be little doubt, by secret conventicles of persisting or relapsed pagans, or of heretics. Both, perhaps, contributed their share. Sometimes a mountain, as in Germany the Blocksberg,† sometimes a conspicuous oak or linden, and there were many such among both Gauls and Germans sacred of old to pagan rites, and later a lonely heath, a place where two roads crossed each other, a cavern, gravel-pit, or quarry, the gallows, or the churchyard, was the place appointed for their diabolic orgies. That the witch could be conveyed bodily to these meetings was at first admitted without any question. But as the husbands of accused persons sometimes testified that their wives had not left their beds on the alleged night of meeting, the witchmongers were put to strange shifts by way of account-

* De Lamiis, p. 59 *et seq.*

† If the *Blokula* of the Swedish witches be a reminiscence of this, it would seem to point back to remote times and heathen ceremonies. But it is so impossible to distinguish what was put into the mind of those who confessed by their examining torturers from what may have been there before, the result of a common superstition, that perhaps, after all, the meeting on mountains may have been suggested by what Pliny says of the dances of Satyrs on Mount Atlas.

ing for it. Sometimes the Devil imposed on the husband by a *deceptio visus*; sometimes a demon took the place of the wife; sometimes the body was left and the spirit only transported. But the more orthodox opinion was in favor of corporeal deportation. Bodin appeals triumphantly to the cases of Habba-kuk (now in the Apocrypha, but once making a part of the Book of Daniel), and of Philip in the Acts of the Apostles. "I find," he says, "this ecstatic ravishment they talk of much more wonderful than bodily transport. And if the Devil has this power, as they confess, of ravishing the spirit out of the body, is it not more easy to carry body and soul without separation or division of the reasonable part, than to withdraw and divide the one from the other without death?" The author of *De Lamiis* argues for the corporeal theory. "The evil Angels have the same superiority of natural power as the good, since by the Fall they lost none of the gifts of nature, but only those of grace." Now, as we know that good angels can thus transport men in the twinkling of an eye, it follows that evil ones may do the same. He fortifies his position by a recent example from secular history. "No one doubts about John Faust, who dwelt at Wittenberg, in the time of the sainted Luther, and who, seating himself on his cloak with his companions, was conveyed away and borne by the Devil through the air to distant kingdoms."* Glanvil inclines rather to the spiritual than the material hypothesis, and suggests "that the Witch's anointing herself before she takes her flight may perhaps serve to keep the body tenatable and in fit disposition to receive the spirit at its return." Aubrey, whose "Miscellanies" were published in 1696, had no doubts whatever as to the physical asportation of the witch. He says that a gentleman of his acquaintance "was in Portugal *anno* 1655, when one was burnt by the inquisition for being brought thither from Goa, in East India, in the air, in an incredible short time." As to the conveyance of witches through crevices, keyholes, chimneys, and the like, Herr Walburger discusses the question with such comical gravity that we must give his argument in the undi-

* Wierus, whose book was published not long after Faust's death, apparently doubted the whole story, for he alludes to it with an *ut fertur*, and plainly looked on him as a mountebank.

minished splendor of its jurisconsult latinity. The first sentence is worthy of Magister Bartholomæus Kuckuk. “Hæc realis delatio trahit me quoque ad illam vulgo agitatam quæstionem: *An diabolus Lamias corpore per angusta foramina parietum, fenestrarum, portarum aut per cavernas ignifluas ferre queant?*” (Surely if *tace* be good Latin for a candle, *caverna igniflua* should be flattering to a chimney). “Resp. Lamiae prædicto modo sæpius fatentur sese a diabolo per caminum aut alia loca angustiora scopis insidentes per ærem ad montem Bructerorum deferri. Verum deluduntur a Satana istæ mulieres hoc casu egregie nec revera rimulas istas penetrant, sed solummodo dæmon præcedens latenter aperit et claudit januas vel fenestras corporis earum capaces, per quas eas intromittit quæ putant se formam animalculi parvi, mustelæ, catti, locustæ, et aliorum induisse. At si forte contingat ut per parietem se delatam confiteatur Saga, tunc, si non totum hoc præstigiosum est, dæmonem tamen maxima celeritate tot quot sufficiunt lapides eximere et sustinere aliosne ruant, et postea eadem celeritate iterum eos in suum locum reponere, existimo: cum hominum adspectus hanc tartarei latomi fraudem nequeat deprehendere. Idem quoque iudicium esse potest de translatione per caminum. Siquidem si caverna igniflua justæ amplitudinis est ut nullo impedimento et hæsitatione corpus humanum eam perrepere possit, diabolo impossibile non esse per eam eas educere. Si vero per inproportionatum (ut ita loquar) corporibus spatium eas educit tunc meras illusiones præstigiosas esse censeo, nec a diabolo hoc unquam effici posse. Ratio est, quoniam diabolus essentiam creaturæ seu lamiae immutare non potest, multo minus efficere ut majus corpus penetret per spatium inproportionatum, alioquin corporum penetratio esset admittenda quod contra naturam et omne Physicorum principium est.” This is fine reasoning, and the *ut ita loquar* thrown in so carelessly, as if with a deprecatory wave of the hand for using a less classical locution than usual, strikes me as a very delicate touch indeed.

Grimm tells us that he does not know when broomsticks, spits, and similar utensils were first assumed to be the canonical instruments of this nocturnal equitation. He thinks it comparatively modern, but I suspect it is as old as the first

child that ever bestrode his father's staff, and fancied it into a courser shod with wind, like those of Pindar. Alas for the poverty of human invention ! It cannot afford a hippogriff for an every-day occasion. The poor old crones, badgered by inquisitors into confessing they had been where they never were, were involved in the further necessity of explaining how the devil they got there. The only steed their parents had ever been rich enough to keep had been of this domestic sort, and they no doubt had ridden in this inexpensive fashion, imagining themselves the grand dames they saw sometimes flash by, in the happy days of childhood, now so far away. Forced to give a *how*, and unable to conceive of mounting in the air without something to sustain them, their bewildered wits naturally took refuge in some such simple subterfuge, and the broom-stave, which might make part of the poorest house's furniture, was the nearest at hand. If youth and good spirits could put such life into a dead stick once, why not age and evil spirits now ? Moreover, what so likely as an *emeritus* implement of this sort to become the staff of a withered beldame, and thus to be naturally associated with her image ? I remember very well a poor half-crazed creature, who always wore a scarlet cloak and leaned on such a stay, cursing and banning after a fashion that would infallibly have burned her two hundred years ago. But apart from any adventitious associations of later growth, it is certain that a very ancient belief gave to magic the power of imparting life, or the semblance of it, to inanimate things, and thus sometimes making servants of them. The wands of the Egyptian magicians were turned to serpents. Still nearer to the purpose is the capital story of Lucian, out of which Goethe made his *Zauberlehrling*, of the stick turned water-carrier. The classical theory of the witch's flight was driven to no such vulgar expedients, the ointment turning her into a bird for the nonce, as in Lucian and Apuleius. In those days, too, there was nothing known of any camp-meeting of witches and wizards, but each sorceress transformed herself that she might fly to her paramour. According to some of the Scotch stories, the witch, after bestriding her broomstick, must repeat the magic formula, *Horse and Hattock !* The flitting of these ill-omened night-birds, like

nearly all the general superstitions relating to witchcraft, mingles itself and is lost in a throng of figures more august.* Diana, Bertha, Holda, Abundia, Befana, once beautiful and divine, the bringers of blessings while men slept, became demons haunting the drear of darkness with terror and ominous suggestion. The process of disenchantment must have been a long one, and none can say how soon it became complete. Perhaps we may take Heine's word for it, that

"Genau bei Weibern
Weiss man niemals wo der Engel
Aufhört und der Teufel anfängt."

Once goblinized, Herodias joins them, doomed still to bear about the Baptist's head; and Woden, who, first losing his identity in the Wild Huntsman, sinks by degrees into the mere *spook* of a Suabian baron, sinfully fond of field-sports, and therefore punished with an eternal phantasm of them, "the hunter and the deer a shade." More and more vulgarized, the infernal train snatches up and sweeps along with it every lawless shape and wild conjecture of distempered fancy, streaming away at last into a comet's tail of wild-haired hags, eager with unnatural hate and more unnatural lust, the nightmare breed of some exorcist's or inquisitor's surfeit, whose own lie has turned upon him in sleep.

As it is painfully interesting to trace the gradual degeneration of a poetic faith into the ritual of unimaginative Tupperism, so it is amusing to see pedantry clinging faithfully to the traditions of its prosaic nature, and holding sacred the dead shells that once housed a moral symbol. What a divine thing the *outside* always has been and continues to be! And how the cast clothes of the mind continue always to be in fashion! We turn our coats without changing the cut of them. But was it possible for a man to change not only his skin but his nature? Were there such things as *versipelles*, *lycanthropi*, *werwolves*, and *loup-garous*? In the earliest ages science was poetry, as in the later poetry has become science. The phenomena of nature, imaginatively represented, were not long in becoming myths. These the primal poets reproduced again as symbols, no longer of physical, but of moral truths. By and by

* See Grimm's D. M., under *Hexenart*, *Wütendes Heer*, &c.

the professional poets, in search of a subject, are struck by the fund of picturesque material lying unused in them, and work them up once more as narratives, with appropriate personages and decorations. Thence they take the further downward step into legend, and from that to superstition. How many metamorphoses between the elder Edda and the Nibelungen, between Arcturus and the "Idyls of the King"! Let a good, thorough-paced proser get hold of one of these stories, and he carefully desiccates them of whatever fancy may be left, till he has reduced them to the proper dryness of fact. King Lycæon, grandson by the spindleside of Oceanus, after passing through all the stages I have mentioned, becomes the ancestor of the werwolf. Ovid is put upon the stand as a witness, and testifies to the undoubted fact of the poor monarch's own metamorphosis : —

"Territus ipse fugit, nactusque silentia ruris
Exululat, frustra que loqui conatur."

Does any one still doubt that men may be changed into beasts? Call Lucian, call Apuleius, call Homer, whose story of the companions of Ulysses made swine of by Circe, says Bodin, *n'est pas fable*. If that arch-patron of sorcerers, Wierus, is still unconvinced, and pronounces the whole thing a delusion of diseased imagination, what does he say to Nebuchadnezzar? Nay, let St. Austin be subpoenaed, who declares that "in his time among the Alps sorceresses were common, who, by making travellers eat of a certain cheese, changed them into beasts of burden and then back again into men." Too confiding tourist, beware of *Gruyère*, especially at supper! Then there was the Philosopher Ammonius, whose lectures were constantly attended by an ass, — a phenomenon not without parallel in more recent times, and all the more credible to Bodin, who had been professor of civil law.

In one case we have fortunately the evidence of the ass himself. In Germany, two witches who kept an inn made an ass of a young actor, — not always a very prodigious transformation it will be thought by those familiar with the stage. In his new shape he drew customers by his amusing tricks, — *voluptates mille viatoribus exhibebat*. But one day making his escape (having overheard the secret from his mistresses),

he plunged into the water and was disasinated to the extent of recovering his original shape. “Id Petrus Damianus, vir sua ætate inter primos numerandus, cum rem sciscitatus est diligentissime ex hero, *ex asino*, ex mulieribus sagis confessis factum, Leoni VII. Papæ narravit, et postquam diu in utranque partem coram Papa fuit disputatum, hoc tandem posse fieri fuit constitutum.” Bodin must have been delighted with this story, though perhaps as a Protestant he might have vilified the infallible decision of the Pope in its favor. As for lycanthropy, that was too common in his own time to need any confirmation. It was notorious to all men. “In Livonia, during the latter part of December, a villain goes about summoning the sorcerers to meet at a certain place, and if they fail, the Devil scourges them thither with an iron rod, and that so sharply that the marks of it remain upon them. Their captain goes before; and they, to the number of several thousands, follow him across a river, which passed, they change into wolves, and, casting themselves upon men and flocks, do all manner of damage.” This we have on the authority of Melancthon’s son-in-law, Gaspar Peucerus. Moreover, many books published in Germany affirm “that one of the greatest kings in Christendom, not long since dead, was often changed into a wolf.” But what need of words? The conclusive proof remains, that many in our own day, being put to the torture, have confessed the fact, and been burned alive accordingly. The maintainers of the reality of witchcraft in the next century seem to have dropped the *werwolf* by common consent, though supported by the same kind of evidence they relied on in other matters, namely, that of ocular witnesses, the confession of the accused, and general notoriety. So lately as 1765 the French peasants believed the “wild beast of the Gevaudan” to be a *loup-garou*, and that, I think, is his last appearance.

The particulars of the concubinage of witches with their familiars were discussed with a relish and a filthy minuteness worthy of Sanchez. Could children be born of these devilish amours? Of course they could, said one party; are there not plenty of cases in authentic history? Who was the father of Romulus and Remus? nay, not so very long ago, of Merlin? Another party denied the possibility of the thing al-

together. Among these was Luther, who declared the children either to be supposititious, or else mere imps, disguised as innocent sucklings, and known as *Wechselkinder*, or changelings, who were common enough, as everybody must be aware. Of the intercourse itself Luther had no doubts.* A third party took a middle ground, and believed that vermin and toads might be the offspring of such amours. But how did the Demon, a mere spiritual essence, contrive himself a body? Some would have it that he entered into dead bodies, by preference, of course, those of sorcerers. It is plain, from the confession of De la Rue, that this was the theory of his examiners. This also had historical evidence in its favor. There was the well-known leading case of the Bride of Corinth, for example. And but yesterday, as it were, at Crossen in Silesia, did not Christopher Monig, an apothecary's servant, come back after being buried, and do duty, as if nothing particular had happened, putting up prescriptions as usual, and "pounding drugs in the mortar with a mighty noise"? Apothecaries seem to have been special victims of these Satanic pranks, for another appeared at Reichenbach not long before, affirming that "he had poisoned several men with his drugs," which certainly gives an air of truth to the story. Accordingly the Devil is represented as being unpleasantly cold to the touch. "Caietan escrit qu'une sorciere demanda un iour au diable pourquoy il ne se rechauffoit, qui fist response qu'il faisoit ce qu'il pouuoit." Poor Devil! But there are cases in which the demon is represented as so hot that his grasp left a seared spot as black as charcoal. Perhaps some of them came from the torrid zone of their broad empire, and others from the thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice. Those who were not satisfied with the dead-body theory contented themselves, like Dr. More, with that of "adscititious particles," which has, to be sure, a more metaphysical and scholastic flavor about it. That the demons really came, either corporeally or through some diabolic illusion that amounted to the same thing, and that the witch devoted herself to him body and soul, scarce any-

* Some Catholics, indeed, affirmed that he himself was the son of a demon who lodged in his father's house under the semblance of a merchant. Wierus says that a bishop preached to that effect in 1565, and gravely refutes the story.

body was bold enough to doubt. To these familiars their venerable paramours gave endearing nicknames, such as *My little Master*, or *My dear Martin*, — the latter, probably, after the heresy of Luther, and when the rack was popish. The famous witch-finder Hopkins enables us to lengthen the list considerably. One witch whom he convicted, after being “kept from sleep two or three nights,” called in five of her devilish servitors. The first was “*Holt*, who came in like a white kitling”; the second, “*Jarmara*, like a fat spaniel without any legs at all”; the third, “*Vinegar Tom*, who was like a long-tailed greyhound with an head like an oxe, with a long tail and broad eyes, who, when this discoverer spoke to and bade him go to the place provided for him and his angells, immediately transformed himself into the shape of a child of foure yeares old, without a head, and gave half a dozen turnes about the house and vanished at the doore”; the fourth, “*Sack and Sugar*, like a black rabbit”; the fifth, “*News*, like a polcat.” Other names of his finding were *Elemauzer*, *Pywacket*, *Peck-in-the-Crown*, *Grizzel*, and *Greedygut*, “which,” he adds, “no mortal could invent.” The name of *Robin*, which we met with in the confession of *Alice Duke*, has, perhaps, wider associations than the woman herself dreamed of; for, through *Robin des Bios* and *Robin Hood*, it may be another of those scattered traces that lead us back to *Woden*. Probably, however, it is only our old friend *Robin Goodfellow*, whose namesake *Knecht Ruprecht* makes such a figure in the German fairy mythology. Possessed persons called in higher agencies, — *Thrones*, *Dominations*, *Princedomes*, *Powers*; and among the witnesses against *Urbain Grandier* we find the names of *Leviathan*, *Behemoth*, *Isaacarum*, *Belaam*, *Asmodeus*, and *Beherit*, who spoke French very well, but were remarkably poor Latinists, knowing, indeed, almost as little of the language as if their youth had been spent in writing Latin verses.* A shrewd Scotch physician tried them with Gaelic, but they could make nothing of it.

It was only when scepticism had begun to make itself un-

* Melancthon, however, used to tell of a possessed girl in Italy who knew no Latin, but the Devil in her, being asked by Bonamico, a Bolognese professor, what was the best verse in Virgil, answered at once: —

“*Discite justitiam moniti, et non temnere divos,*” —

a somewhat remarkable concession on the part of a fallen angel.

comfortably inquisitive, that the Devil had any difficulty in making himself visible and even palpable. In simpler times, demons would almost seem to have made no inconsiderable part of the population. Trithemius tells of one who served as cook to the Bishop of Hildesheim (one shudders to think of the school where he had graduated as *Cordon bleu*), and who delectebatur esse cum hominibus, loquens, interrogans, respondens familiariter omnibus, aliquando visibiliter, aliquando invisibiliter apparens. This last feat of “appearing invisibly” would have been worth seeing. In 1554, the Devil came of a Christmas eve to Lawrence Doner, a parish priest in Saxony, and asked to be confessed. “Admissus, horrendas adversus Christum filium Dei blasphemias evomit. Verum cum virtute verbi Dei a parochio victus esset, intolerabili post se relicto fœtore abiit.” Splendidly dressed, with two companions, he frequented an honest man’s house at Rothenberg. He brought with him a piper or fiddler, and contrived feasts and dances under pretext of wooing the goodman’s daughter. He boasted that he was a foreign nobleman of immense wealth, and, for a time, was as successful as an Italian courier has been known to be at one of our fashionable watering-places. But the importunity of the guest and his friends at length displicuit patrifamilias, who accordingly one evening invited a minister of the word to meet them at supper, and entered upon pious discourse with him from the word of God. Wherefore, seeking other matter of conversation, they said that there were many facetious things more suitable to exhilarate the supper-table than the interpretation of Holy Writ, and begged that they might be no longer bored with Scripture. Thoroughly satisfied by their singular way of thinking that his guests were diabolical, paterfamilias cries out in Latin worthy of Father Tom, “Apagite, vos scelerati nebulones!” This said, the tartarean impostor and his companions at once vanished with a great tumult, leaving behind them a most unpleasant fœtor and the bodies of three men who had been hanged. Perhaps if the clergyman-cure were faithfully tried upon the next fortune-hunting count with a large real estate in whiskers and imaginary one in Barataria, he also might vanish, leaving a strong smell of barber’s-shop, and taking with him a body that will come to the

gallows in due time. It were worth trying. Luther tells of a demon who served as *famulus* in a monastery, fetching beer for the monks, and always insisting on honest measure for his money. There is one case on record where the Devil appealed to the courts for protection in his rights. A monk, going to visit his mistress, fell dead as he was passing a bridge. The good and bad angel came to litigation about his soul. The case was referred by agreement to Richard, Duke of Normandy, who decided that the monk's body should be carried back to the bridge, and his soul restored to it by the claimants. If he persevered in keeping his assignation, the Devil was to have him, if not, then the Angel. The monk, thus put upon his guard, turns back and saves his soul, such as it was.* Perhaps the most impudent thing the Devil ever did was to open a school of magic in Toledo. The ceremony of graduation in this institution was peculiar. The senior class had all to run through a narrow cavern, and the venerable president was entitled to the hindmost, if he could catch him. Sometimes it happened that he caught only his shadow, and in that case the man who had been nimble enough to do what Goethe pronounces impossible, became the most profound magician of his year. Hence our proverb of *the Devil take the hindmost*, and Chamisso's story of Peter Schlemihl.

There is no end to such stories. They were repeated and believed by the gravest and wisest men down to the end of the sixteenth century; they were received undoubtingly by the great majority down to the end of the seventeenth. The Devil was an easy way of accounting for what was beyond men's comprehension. He was the simple and satisfactory answer to all the conundrums of Nature. And what the Devil had not time to bestow his personal attention upon, the witch was always ready to do for him. Was a doctor at a loss about a

* This story seems mediæval and Gothic enough, but is hardly more so than bringing the case of the Furies *v.* Orestes before the Areopagus, and putting Apollo in the witness-box, as Æschylus has done. The classics, to be sure, are always so classic! In the *Eumenides*, Apollo takes the place of the good angel. And why not? For though a demon, and a lying one, he has crept in to the calendar under his other name of Helios as St. Helias. Could any of his oracles have foretold this?

case ? How could he save his credit more cheaply than by pronouncing it witchcraft, and turning it over to the parson to be exorcised ? Did a man's cow die suddenly, or his horse fall lame ? Witchcraft ! Did one of those writers of controversial quartos, heavy as the stone of Diomed, feel a pain in the small of his back ? Witchcraft ! Unhappily there were always ugly old women ; and if you crossed them in any way, or did them a wrong, they were given to scolding and banning. If, within a year or two after, anything should happen to you or yours, why, of course, old Mother Bombie or Goody Blake must be at the bottom of it. For it was perfectly well known that there were witches, (does not God's law say expressly, "Suffer not a *witch* to live ?") and that they could cast a spell by the mere glance of their eyes, could cause you to pine away by melting a waxen image, could give you a pain wherever they liked by sticking pins into the same, could bring sickness into your house or into your barn by hiding a Devil's powder under the threshold ; and who knows what else ? Worst of all, they could send a demon into your body, who would cause you to vomit pins, hair, pebbles, knives, — indeed, almost anything short of a cathedral, — without any fault of yours, utter through you the most impertinent things *verbi ministro*, and, in short, make you the most important personage in the parish for the time being. Meanwhile, you were an object of condolence and contribution to the whole neighborhood. What wonder if a lazy apprentice or servant-maid (Bekker gives several instances of the kind detected by him) should prefer being possessed, with its attendant perquisites, to drudging from morning till night ? And to any one who has observed how common a thing in certain states of mind self-connivance is, and how near it is to self-deception, it will not be surprising that some were, to all intents and purposes, really possessed. Who has never felt an almost irresistible temptation, and seemingly not self-originated, to let himself go ? to let his mind gallop and kick and curvet and roll like a horse turned loose ? in short, as we Yankees say, "to speak out in meeting" ? Who never had it suggested to him by the fiend to break in at a funeral with a real character of the deceased, instead of that Mrs. Grundyified view of him which the clergyman is so pain-

fully elaborating in his prayer? Remove the pendulum of conventional routine, and the mental machinery runs on with a whirl that gives a delightful excitement to sluggish temperaments, and is, perhaps, the natural relief of highly nervous organizations. The tyrant Will is dethroned, and the sceptre snatched by his frolic sister Whim. This state of things, if continued, must become either insanity or imposture. But who can say precisely where consciousness ceases and a kind of automatic movement begins, the result of over-excitement? The subjects of these strange disturbances have been almost always young women or girls at a critical period of their development. Many of the most remarkable cases have occurred in convents, and both there and elsewhere, as in other kinds of temporary nervous derangement, have proved contagious. Sometimes, as in the affair of the nuns of Loudon, there seems every reason to suspect a conspiracy; but I am not quite ready to say that Grandier was the only victim, and that some of the energumens were not unconscious tools in the hands of priestcraft and revenge. One thing is certain: that in the dioceses of humanely sceptical prelates the cases of possession were sporadic only, and either cured, or at least hindered from becoming epidemic, by episcopal mandate. Cardinal Mazarin, when Papal vice-legat at Avignon, made an end of the trade of exorcism within his government.

But scepticism, down to the beginning of the eighteenth century, was the exception. Undoubting and often fanatical belief was the rule. It is easy enough to be astonished at it, still easier to misapprehend it. How could sane men have been deceived by such nursery-tales? Still more, how could they have suffered themselves, on what seems to us such puerile evidence, to consent to such atrocious cruelties, nay, to urge them on? As to the belief, we should remember that the human mind, when it sails by *dead reckoning*, without the possibility of a fresh observation, perhaps without the instruments necessary to take one, will sometimes bring up in very strange latitudes. Do we of the nineteenth century, then, always strike out boldly into the unlandmarked deep of speculation and shape our courses by the stars, or do we not sometimes con our voyage by what seem to us the firm and familiar

headlands of truth, planted by God himself, but which may, after all, be no more than an insubstantial mockery of cloud or airy juggle of mirage? The refraction of our own atmosphere has by no means made an end of its tricks with the appearances of things in our little world of thought. The men of that day believed what they saw, or, as our generation would put it, what they *thought* they saw. Very good. The vast majority of men believe, and always will believe, on the same terms. When one comes along who can partly distinguish the thing seen from that travesty or distortion of it which the thousand disturbing influences within him and without him would *make* him see, we call him a great philosopher. All our intellectual charts are engraved according to his observations, and we steer contentedly by them till some man whose brain rests on a still more unmovable basis corrects them still further by eliminating what his predecessor thought *he* saw. We must account for many former aberrations in the moral world by the presence of more or less nebulous bodies of a certain gravity which modified the actual position of truth in its relation to the mind, and which, if they have now vanished, have made way, perhaps, for others whose influence will in like manner be allowed for posterity in their estimate of us. In matters of faith astrology has by no means yet given place to astronomy, nor alchemy become chemistry, which knows what to seek for and how to find it. In the days of witchcraft all science was still in the condition of *May-be*; it is only just bringing itself to find a higher satisfaction in the imperturbable *Must-be* of law. We should remember that what we call *natural* may have a very different meaning to one generation from that which it has to the next. The boundary between the "other" world and this ran till very lately, and at some points runs still, through a vast tract of unexplored border-land of very uncertain tenure. Even now the territory which Reason holds firmly as Lord Warden of the marches during daylight, is subject to sudden raids of Imagination by night. But physical darkness is not the only one that lends opportunity to such incursions; and in mid-summer 1692, when Ebenezer Bapson, looking out of the fort at Gloucester in broad day, saw shapes of men, sometimes in blue coats like Indians, sometimes in white waistcoats like

Frenchmen, it seemed *more* natural to most men that they should be spectres than men of flesh and blood. Granting the assumed premises, as nearly every one did, the syllogism was perfect.

So much for the apparent reasonableness of the belief, since every man's logic is satisfied with a legitimate deduction from his own postulates. Causes for the cruelty to which the belief led are not further to seek. Toward no crime have men shown themselves so cold-bloodedly cruel as in punishing difference of belief, and the first systematic persecutions for witchcraft began with the inquisitors in the South of France in the thirteenth century. It was then and there that the charge of sexual uncleanness with demons was first devised. Persecuted heretics would naturally meet in darkness and secret, and it was easy to blacken such meetings with the accusation of deeds so foul as to shun the light of day and the eyes of men. They met to renounce God and worship the Devil. But this was not enough. To excite popular hatred and keep it fiercely alive, fear must be mingled with it; and this end was reached by making the heretic also a sorcerer, who, by the Devil's help, could and would work all manner of fiendish mischief. When by this means the belief in a league between witch and demon had become firmly established, witchcraft grew into a well-defined crime, hateful enough in itself to furnish pastime for the torturer and food for the fagot. In the fifteenth century witches were burned by thousands, and it may well be doubted if all paganism together was ever guilty of so many human sacrifices in the same space of time. In the sixteenth, these holocausts were appealed to as conclusive evidence of the reality of the crime, terror was again aroused, the more vindictive that its sources were so vague and intangible, and cruelty was the natural consequence. Nothing but an abject panic, in which the whole use of reason, except as a mill to grind out syllogisms, was altogether lost, will account for some chapters in Bodin's *Démonomanie*. Men were surrounded by a forever-renewed conspiracy whose ramifications they could not trace, though they might now and then lay hold on one of its associates. Protestant and Catholic might agree in nothing else, but they were unanimous in their dread of this invisible enemy. If fright could turn civilized

Englishmen into savage Iroquois during the imagined negro plots of New York in 1741 and of Jamaica in 1865, if the same invisible omnipresence of Fenianism shall be able to work the same miracle, as it probably will, next year in England itself, why should we be astonished that the blows should have fallen upon many an innocent head when men were striking wildly in self-defence, as they supposed, against the unindictable Powers of Darkness, against a plot which could be carried on by human agents, but with invisible accessories and by supernatural means? In the seventeenth century an element was added which pretty well supplied the place of heresy as a sharpener of hatred and an awakener of indefinable suspicion. Scepticism had been born into the world, almost more hateful than heresy, because it had the manners of good society and contented itself with a smile, a shrug, an almost imperceptible lift of the eyebrow,—a kind of reasoning especially exasperating to disputants of the old school, who still cared about victory, even when they did not about the principles involved in the debate.

The Puritan emigration to New England took place at a time when the belief in diabolic agency had been hardly called in question, much less shaken. They brought it with them to a country in every way fitted, not only to keep it alive, but to feed it into greater vigor. The solitude of the wilderness (and solitude alone, by dis-furnishing the brain of its commonplace associations, makes it an apt theatre for the delusions of imagination), the nightly forest noises, the glimpse, perhaps, through the leaves, of a painted savage face, uncertain whether of redman or Devil, but more likely of the latter, above all, that measureless mystery of the unknown and conjectural stretching away illimitable on all sides and vexing the mind, somewhat as physical darkness does, with intimation and mis-giving,—under all these influences, whatever seeds of superstition had in any way got over from the Old World would find an only too congenial soil in the New. The leaders of that emigration believed and taught that demons loved to dwell in waste and wooded places, that the Indians did homage to the bodily presence of the Devil, and that he was especially enraged against those who had planted an outpost of the true faith upon

this continent, hitherto all his own. In the third generation of the settlement, in proportion as living faith decayed, the clergy insisted all the more strongly on the traditions of the elders, and as they all placed the sources of goodness and religion in some inaccessible Other World rather than in the soul of man himself, they clung to every shred of the supernatural as proof of the existence of that Other World, and of its interest in the affairs of this. They had the countenance of all the great theologians, Catholic as well as Protestant, of the leaders of the Reformation, and in their own day of such men as More and Glanvil and Baxter.* If to all these causes, more or less operative in 1692, we add the harassing excitement of an Indian war (urged on by Satan in his hatred of the churches), with its daily and nightly apprehensions and alarms, we shall be less astonished that the delusion in Salem Village rose so high than that it subsided so soon.

I have already said that it was religious antipathy or clerical interest that first made heresy and witchcraft identical and cast them into the same expiatory fire. The invention was a Catholic one, but it is plain that Protestants soon learned its value and were not slow in making it a plague to the inventor. It was not till after the Reformation that there was any systematic hunting out of witches in England. Then, no doubt, the innocent charms and rhyming prayers of the old religion were regarded as incantations, and twisted into evidence against miserable beldames who mumbled over in their dotage what they had learned at their mother's knee. It is plain, at least, that this was one of Agnes Simpson's crimes.

But as respects the frivolity of the proof adduced, there was nothing to choose between Catholic and Protestant. Out of civil and canon law a net was woven through whose meshes

* Mr. Leckie, in his admirable chapter on Witchcraft, gives a little more credit to the enlightenment of the Church of England in this matter than it would seem fairly to deserve. More and Glanvil were faithful sons of the Church; and if the persecution of witches was especially rife during the ascendancy of the Puritans, it was because they happened to be in power while there was a reaction against Sadducism. All the convictions were under the statute of James I., who was no Puritan. After the restoration, the reaction was the other way, and Hobbism became the fashion. It is more philosophical to say that the age believes this and that, than that the particular men who live in it do so.

there was no escape, and into it the victims were driven by popular clamor. Suspicion of witchcraft was justified by general report, by the ill-looks of the suspected, by being silent when accused, by her mother's having been a witch, by flight, by exclaiming when arrested, *I am lost!* by a habit of using imprecations, by the evidence of two witnesses, by the accusation of a man on his death-bed, by a habit of being away from home at night, by fifty other things equally grave. Anybody might be an accuser, — a personal enemy, an infamous person, a child, parent, brother, or sister. Once accused, the culprit was not to be allowed to touch the ground on the way to prison, was not to be left alone there lest she have interviews with the Devil and get from him the means of being insensible under torture, was to be stripped and shaved in order to prevent her concealing some charm, or to facilitate the finding of witch-marks. Her right thumb tied to her left great-toe, and *vice versa*, she was thrown into the water. If she floated, she was a witch; if she sank and was drowned, she was lucky. This trial, as old as the days of Pliny the Elder, was gone out of fashion, the author of *De Lamiis* assures us, in his day everywhere but in Westphalia. "On halfproof or strong presumption," says Bodin, the judge may proceed to torture. If the witch did not shed tears under the rack, it was almost conclusive of guilt. On this topic of torture he grows eloquent. The rack does very well, but to thrust splinters between the nails and flesh of hands and feet "is the most excellent gehenna of all, and practised in Turkey." That of Florence, where they seat the criminal in a hanging chair so contrived that if he drop asleep it overturns and leaves him hanging by a rope which wrenches his arms backwards, is perhaps even better, "for the limbs are not broken, and without trouble or labor one gets out the truth." It is well in carrying the accused to the chamber of torture to cause some in the next room to shriek fearfully as if on the rack, that they may be terrified into confession. It is proper to tell them that their accomplices have confessed and accused them ("though they have done no such thing") that they may do the same out of revenge. The judge may also with a good conscience lie to the prisoner and tell her that if she admit her guilt, she may

be pardoned. This is Bodin's opinion, but Walburger, writing a century later, concludes that the judge may go to any extent *citra mendacium*, this side of lying. He may tell the witch that he will be favorable, meaning to the Commonwealth; that he will see that she has a new house built for her, that is, a wooden one to burn her in; that her confession will be most useful in saving her life, to wit, her life eternal. There seems little difference between the German's white lies and the Frenchman's black ones. As to punishment, Bodin is fierce for burning. Though a Protestant, he quotes with evident satisfaction a decision of the magistrates that one "who had eaten flesh on a Friday should be burned alive unless he repented, and if he repented, yet he was hanged out of compassion." A child under twelve who will not confess meeting with the Devil should be put to death if convicted of the fact, though Bodin allows that Satan made no express compact with those who had not arrived at puberty. This he learned from the examination of Jeanne Harvillier, who deposed, "that, though her mother dedicated her to Satan so soon as she was born, yet she was not married to him, nor did he demand that, or her renunciation of God, till she had attained the age of twelve."

There is no more painful reading than this, except the trials of the witches themselves. These awaken, by turns pity, indignation, disgust, and dread,—dread at the thought of what the human mind may be brought to believe not only probable, but proven. But it is well to be put upon our guard by lessons of this kind, for the wisest man is in some respects little better than a madman in a strait-waistcoat of habit, public opinion, prudence, or the like. Scepticism began at length to make itself felt, but it spread slowly and was shy of proclaiming itself. The orthodox party was not backward to charge with sorcery whoever doubted their facts or pitied their victims. Bodin says that it is good cause of suspicion against a judge if he turn the matter into ridicule, or incline toward mercy. The mob, as it always is, was orthodox. It was dangerous to doubt, it might be fatal to deny. In 1453 Guillaume de Lure was burned at Poitiers on his own confession of a compact with Satan, by which he agreed "to preach and did preach that

everything told of sorcerers was mere fable, and that it was cruelly done to condemn them to death." This contract was found among his papers signed "with the Devil's own claw," as Howell says speaking of a similar case. It is not to be wondered at that the earlier doubters were cautious. There was literally a reign of terror, and during such *régimes* men are commonly found more eager to be informers and accusers than of counsel for the defence. Peter of Abano is reckoned among the earliest unbelievers who declared himself openly.* Chaucer was certainly a sceptic, as appears by the opening of the Wife of Bath's tale. Wierus, a German physician, was the first to undertake (1563) a refutation of the facts and assumptions on which the prosecutions for witchcraft were based. His explanation of the phenomena is mainly physiological. Mr. Leckie hardly states his position correctly, in saying "that he never dreamed of restricting the sphere of the supernatural." Wierus went as far as he dared. No one can read his book without feeling that he insinuates much more than he positively affirms or denies. He would have weakened his cause if he had seemed to disbelieve in demoniacal possession, since that had the supposed warrant of Scripture; but it may be questioned whether he uses the words *Satan* and *Demon* in any other way than that in which many people still use the word *Nature*. He was forced to accept certain premises of his opponents by the line of his argument. When he recites incredible stories without comment, it is not that he believes them, but that he thinks their absurdity obvious. That he wrote under a certain restraint is plain from the Colophon of his book, where he says: "Nihil autem hic ita assertum volo, quod æquiori iudicio Catholicæ Christi Ecclesiæ non omnino submittam, palinodia mox spontanea emendaturus, si erroris alicubi convincar." A great deal of latent and timid scepticism seems to have been brought to the surface by his work. Many eminent persons wrote to him in gratitude and commendation. In the Preface to his

* I have no means of ascertaining whether he did or not. He was more probably charged with it by the inquisitors. Mr. Leckie seems to write of him only upon hearsay, for he calls him Peter "of Apono," apparently translating a French translation of the Latin "Aponus." The only book attributed to him that I have ever seen is itself a kind of manual of magic.

shorter treatise *De Lamiis* (which is a mere abridgment), he thanks God that his labors had "in many places caused the cruelty against innocent blood to slacken," and that "some more distinguished judges treat more mildly and even absolve from capital punishment the wretched old women branded with the odious name of witches by the populace." In the *Pseudomonarchia Dæmonum*, he gives a kind of census of the diabolic kingdom,* but evidently with secret intention of making the whole thing ridiculous, or it would not have so stirred the bile of Bodin. Wierus was saluted by many contemporaries as a Hercules who destroyed monsters, and himself not immodestly claimed the civic wreath for having saved the lives of fellow-citizens. Posterity should not forget a man who really did an honest life's work for humanity and the liberation of thought. From one of the letters appended to his book we learn that Jacobus Savagius, a physician of Antwerp, had twenty years before written a treatise with the same design, but confining himself to the medical argument exclusively. He was, however, prevented from publishing it by death. It is pleasant to learn from Bodin that Alciato, the famous lawyer and emblemist, was one of those who "laughed and made others laugh at the evidence relied on at the trials, insisting that witchcraft was a thing impossible and fabulous, and so softened the hearts of judges (in spite of the fact that an inquisitor had caused to burn more than a hundred sorcerers in Piedmont), that all the accused escaped." In England, Reginald Scot was the first to enter the lists in behalf of those who had no champion. His book, published in 1584, is full of manly sense and spirit, above all, of a tender humanity that gives it a warmth which we miss in every other written on the same side. In the dedication to Sir Roger Manwood he says: "I renounce all protection and despise all friendship that might serve towards the suppressing or supplanting of truth." To his kinsman, Sir Thomas Scot, he writes: "My greatest adversaries are *young ignorance* and *old custom*; for what folly soever tract of time hath fostered, it is

* "With the names and surnames," says Bodin, indignantly, "of seventy-two princes, and of seven million four hundred and five thousand nine hundred and twenty-six devils, *errors excepted*."

so superstitiously pursued of some, as though no error could be acquainted with custom." And in his Preface he thus states his motives: "God that knoweth my heart is witness, and you that read my book shall see, that my drift and purpose in this enterprise tendeth only to these respects. First, that the glory and power of God be not so abridged and abased as to be thrust into the hand or lip of a lewd old woman, whereby the work of the Creator should be attributed to the power of a creature. Secondly, that the religion of the Gospel may be seen to stand without such peevish trumpery. Thirdly, that lawful favor and Christian compassion be rather used towards these poor souls than rigor and extremity. Because they which are commonly accused of witchcraft are the least sufficient of all other persons to speak for themselves, as having the most base and simple education of all others, the extremity of their age giving them leave to dote, their poverty to beg, their wrongs to chide and threaten (as being void of any other way of revenge), their humor melancholical to be full of imaginations, from whence chiefly proceedeth the vanity of their confessions. . . . And for so much as the mighty help themselves together, and the poor widow's cry, though it reach to Heaven, is scarce heard here upon earth, I thought good (according to my poor ability) to make intercession that some part of common rigor and some points of hasty judgment may be advised upon." . . . The case is nowhere put with more point or urged with more sense and eloquence than by Scot, whose book contains also more curious matter, in the way of charms, incantations, exorcisms, and feats of legerdemain than any other of the kind.

Other books followed on the same side, of which Bekker's, published about a century later, was the most important. It is well reasoned, learned, and tedious to a masterly degree. But though the belief in witchcraft might be shaken, it still had the advantage of being on the whole orthodox and respectable. Wise men, as usual, insisted on regarding superstition as of one substance with faith, and objected to any scouring of the shield of religion, lest, like that of Cornelius Scriblerus, it should suddenly turn out to be nothing more than "a paltry old sconce with the nozzle broke off." The Devil continued to

be the only recognized Minister Resident of God upon earth. When we remember that one man's accusation on his death-bed was enough to constitute grave presumption of witchcraft, it might seem singular that dying testimonies were so long of no avail against the common credulity. But it should be remembered that men are mentally no less than corporeally gregarious, and that public opinion, the fetish even of the nineteenth century, makes men, whether for good or ill, into a mob, which either hurries the individual judgment along with it, or runs over and tramples it into insensibility. Those who are so fortunate as to occupy the philosophical position of spectators *ab extra* are very few in any generation.

There were exceptions, it is true, but the old cruelties went on. In 1610 a case came before the tribunal of the *Tourelle*, and when the counsel for the accused argued at some length that sorcery was ineffectual, and that the Devil could not destroy life, President Séguier told him that he might spare his breath, since the court had long been convinced on those points. And yet two years later the grand-vicars of the Bishop of Beauvais solemnly summoned Beelzebuth, Satan, Motelu, and Briffaut, with the four legions under their charge, to appear and sign an agreement never again to enter the bodies of reasonable or other creatures, under pain of excommunication! If they refused, they were to be given over to "the power of hell to be tormented and tortured more than was customary, three thousand years after the judgment." Under this proclamation they all came in, like reconstructed rebels, and signed whatever document was put before them. Toward the middle of the seventeenth century, the safe thing was still to believe, or at any rate to profess belief. Sir Thomas Browne, though he had written an exposure of "Vulgar Errors," testified in court to his faith in the possibility of witchcraft. Sir Kenelm Digby, in his "Observations on the Religio Medici," takes, perhaps, as advanced ground as any, when he says: "Neither do I deny there are witches; I only reserve my assent till I meet with stronger motives to carry it." The position of even enlightened men of the world in that age might be called semi-sceptical. La Bruyère, no doubt, expresses the average of opinion: "Que penser de la magie et du sortilège? La théorie en est

obscurcie, les principes vagues, incertains, et qui approchent du visionnaire ; mais il y a des faits embarrassants, affirmés par des hommes graves qui les ont vus ; les admettre tous, ou les nier tous, paraît un égal inconvénient, et j'ose dire qu'en cela comme en toutes les choses extraordinaires et qui sortent des communes règles, il y a un parti à trouver entre les âmes crédules et les esprits forts." * Montaigne, to be sure, had long before declared his entire disbelief, and yet the Parliament of Bourdeaux, his own city, condemned a man to be burned as a *noïeur d'aiguillettes* so lately as 1718. Indeed, it was not, says Maury, till the first quarter of the eighteenth century that one might safely publish his incredulity in France. In Scotland witches were burned for the last time in 1722. Garinet cites the case of a girl near Amiens possessed by three demons, — Mimi, Zozo, and Crapoulet, — in 1816.

The two beautiful volumes of Mr. Upham are, so far as I know, unique in their kind. It is, in some respects, a clinical lecture on human nature, as well as on the special epidemical disease under which the patient is laboring. He has written not merely a history of the so-called Salem Witchcraft, but has made it intelligible by a minute account of the place where the delusion took its rise, the persons concerned in it, whether as actors or sufferers, and the circumstances which led to it. By deeds, wills, and the records of courts and churches, by plans, maps, and drawings, he has re-created Salem Village as it was two hundred years ago, so that we seem wellnigh to talk with its people and walk over its fields, or through its cart-tracks and bridle-roads. We are made partners in parish and village feuds, we share in the chimney-corner gossip, and learn for the first time how many mean and merely human motives, whether consciously or unconsciously, gave impulse and intensity to the passions of the actors in that memorable tragedy which dealt the death-blow in this country to the belief in Satanic compacts. Mr. Upham's minute details, which give us something like a photographic picture of the in-door and out-door scenery that surrounded the events he narrates, help us materially to understand their origin and the course they inevitably took. In this respect his book is original and full of new interest. To know

* Cited by Maury, p. 221, note 4.

the kind of life these people led, the kind of place they dwelt in, and the tenor of their thought, makes much real to us that was conjectural before. The influences of outward nature, of remoteness from the main highways of the world's thought, of seclusion, as the foster-mother of traditionary beliefs, of a hard life and unwholesome diet in exciting or obscuring the brain through the nerves and stomach, have been hitherto commonly overlooked in accounting for the phenomena of witchcraft. The great persecutions for this imaginary crime have always taken place in lonely places, among the poor, the ignorant, and, above all, the ill-fed.

One of the best things in Mr. Upham's book is the portrait of Parris, the minister of Salem Village, in whose household the children who, under the assumed possession of evil spirits, became accusers and witnesses, began their tricks. He is shown to us pedantic and something of a martinet in church discipline and ceremony, somewhat inclined to magnify his office, fond of controversy as he was skilful and rather unscrupulous in the conduct of it, and glad of any occasion to make himself prominent. Was he the unconscious agent of his own superstition, or did he take advantage of the superstition of others for purposes of his own? The question is not an easy one to answer. Men will sacrifice everything, sometimes even themselves, to their pride of logic and their love of victory. Bodin loses sight of humanity altogether in his eagerness to make out his case, and display his learning in the canon and civil law. He does not scruple to exaggerate, to misquote, to charge his antagonists with atheism, sorcery, and insidious designs against religion and society, that he may persuade the jury of Europe to bring in a verdict of guilty.* Yet there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his belief. Was Parris equally sincere? On the whole, I think it likely that he was. But if we acquit Parris, what shall we say of the demoniacal girls? The probability seems to be that those who began in harmless deceit found themselves at length involved so deeply, that dread of shame and punishment drove them to an extremity where their only choice was between sacrificing them-

* There is a kind of compensation in the fact that he himself lived to be accused of sorcery and Judaism.

selves, or others to save themselves. It is not unlikely that some of the younger girls were so far carried along by imitation or imaginative sympathy as in some degree to "credit their own lie." Any one who has watched or made experiments in animal magnetism knows how easy it is to persuade young women of nervous temperaments that they are doing that by the will of another which they really do by an obscure volition of their own, under the influence of an imagination adroitly guided by the magnetizer. The marvellous is so fascinating, that nine persons in ten, if once persuaded that a thing is possible, are eager to believe it probable, and at last cunning in convincing themselves that it is proven. But it is impossible to believe that the possessed girls in this case did not know how the pins they vomited got into their mouths. Mr. Upham has shown, in the case of Anne Putnam, Jr., an hereditary tendency to hallucination, if not insanity. One of her uncles had seen the Devil by broad daylight in the novel disguise of a blue boar, in which shape, as a tavern sign, he had doubtless proved more seductive than in his more ordinary transfigurations. A great deal of light is let in upon the question of whether there was deliberate imposture or no, by the narrative of Rev. Mr. Turell of Medford, written in 1728, which gives us all the particulars of a case of pretended possession in Littleton, eight years before. The eldest of three sisters began the game, and found herself before long obliged to take the next in age into her confidence. By and by the youngest, finding her sisters pitied and caressed on account of their supposed sufferings while she was neglected, began to play off the same tricks. The usual phenomena followed. They were convulsed, they fell into swoons, they were pinched and bruised, they were found in the water, on the top of a tree or of the barn. To these places they said they were conveyed through the air, and there were those who had seen them flying, which shows how strong is the impulse which prompts men to conspire with their own delusion, where the marvellous is concerned. The girls did whatever they had heard or read that was common in such cases. They even accused a respectable neighbor as the cause of their torments. There were some doubters, but "so far as I can

learn," says Turell, "the greater number believed and said they were under the evil hand, or possessed by Satan." But the most interesting fact of all is supplied by the confession of the elder sister, made eight years later under stress of remorse. Having once begun, they found returning more tedious than going o'er. To keep up their cheat made life a burden to them, but they could not stop. Thirty years earlier, their juggling might have proved as disastrous as that at Salem Village. There, parish and boundary feuds had set enmity between neighbors, and the girls, called on to say who troubled them, cried out upon those whom they had been wont to hear called by hard names at home. They probably had no notion what a frightful ending their comedy was to have ; but at any rate they were powerless, for the reins had passed out of their hands into the sterner grasp of minister and magistrate. They were dragged deeper and deeper, as men always are by their own lie.

The proceedings at the Salem trials are sometimes spoken of as if they were exceptionally cruel. But, in fact, if compared with others of the same kind, they were exceptionally humane. At a time when Baxter could tell with satisfaction of a "*reading* parson" eighty years old, who, after being kept awake five days and nights, confessed his dealings with the Devil, it is rather wonderful that no mode of torture other than mental was tried at Salem. Nor were the magistrates more besotted or unfair than usual in dealing with the evidence. Now and then, it is true, a man more sceptical or intelligent than common had exposed some pretended demoniac. The Bishop of Orléans, in 1598, read aloud to Martha Brossier the story of the Ephesian Widow, and the girl, hearing Latin, and taking it for Scripture, went forthwith into convulsions. He found also that the Devil who possessed her could not distinguish holy from profane water. But that there were deceptions did not shake the general belief in the reality of possession. The proof in such cases could not and ought not to be subjected to the ordinary tests. "If many natural things," says Bodin, "are incredible and some of them incomprehensible, *a fortiori* the power of supernatural intelligences and the doings of spirits are incomprehensible. But error has risen to its height in this, that those who

have denied the power of spirits and the doings of sorcerers have wished to dispute physically concerning supernatural or metaphysical things, which is a notable incongruity." That the girls were really possessed seemed to Stoughton and his colleagues the most rational theory, — a theory in harmony with the rest of their creed, and sustained by the unanimous consent of pious men as well as the evidence of that most cunning and least suspected of all sorcerers, the Past, — and how confront or cross-examine invisible witnesses, especially witnesses whom it was a kind of impiety to doubt? Evidence that would have been convincing in ordinary cases was of no weight against the general prepossession. In 1659 the house of a man in Brightling, Sussex, was troubled by a demon, who set it on fire at various times, and was continually throwing things about. The clergy of the neighborhood held a day of fasting and prayer in consequence. A maid-servant was afterwards detected as the cause of the missiles. But this did not in the least stagger Mr. Bennet, minister of the parish, who merely says: "There was a *seeming blur* cast, though not on the whole, yet upon some part of it, for their servant-girl was at last found throwing some things," and goes off into a eulogium on the "efficacy of prayer."

In one respect, to which Mr. Upham first gives the importance it deserves, the Salem trials were distinguished from all others. Though some of the accused had been terrified into confession, yet not one persevered in it, but all died protesting their innocence, and with unshaken constancy, though an acknowledgment of guilt would have saved the lives of all. This martyr proof of the efficacy of Puritanism in the character and conscience may be allowed to outweigh a great many sneers at Puritan fanaticism. It is at least a testimony to the courage and constancy which a profound religious sentiment had made common among the people of whom these sufferers were average representatives. The accused also were not, as was commonly the case, abandoned by their friends. In all the trials of this kind there is nothing so pathetic as the picture of Jonathan Cary holding up the weary arms of his wife during her trial, and wiping away the sweat from her brow and the tears from her face. Another remarkable fact is this, that while in other

countries the delusion was extinguished by the incredulity of the upper classes and the interference of authority, here the reaction took place among the people themselves, and here only was an attempt made at some legislative restitution, however inadequate. Mr. Upham's sincere and honest narrative, while it never condescends to a formal plea, is the best vindication possible of a community which was itself the greatest sufferer by the persecution which its credulity engendered.

If any lesson may be drawn from the tragical and too often disgusting history of witchcraft, it is not one of exultation at our superior enlightenment or shame at the shortcomings of the human intellect. It is rather one of charity and self-distrust. When we see what inhuman absurdities men in other respects wise and good have clung to as the cornerstone of their faith in immortality and a divine ordering of the world, may we not suspect that those who now maintain political or other doctrines which seem to us barbarous and unenlightened, may be, for all that, in the main as virtuous and clear-sighted as ourselves? While we maintain our own side with an honest ardor of conviction, let us not forget to allow for mortal incompetence in the other. And if there are men who regret the Good Old Times, without too clear a notion of what they were, they should at least be thankful that we are rid of that misguided energy of faith which justified conscience in making men unrelentingly cruel. Even Mr. Leckie softens a little at the thought of the many innocent and beautiful beliefs of which a growing scepticism has robbed us in the decay of supernaturalism. But we need not despair; for, after all, scepticism is first cousin of credulity, and we are not surprised to see the tough doubter Montaigne hanging up his offerings in the shrine of our Lady of Loreto. Scepticism commonly takes up the room left by defect of imagination, and is the very quality of mind most likely to seek for sensual proof of supersensual things. If one came from the dead, it could not believe; and yet it longs for such a witness, and will put up with a very dubious one. So long as night is left and the helplessness of dream, the wonderful will not cease from among men. While we are the solitary prisoners of darkness, the witch seats herself at the loom of thought, and weaves strange figures into

the web that looks so familiar and ordinary in the dry light of every-day. Just as we are flattering ourselves that the old spirit of sorcery is laid, behold the tables are tipping and the floors drumming all over Christendom. The faculty of wonder is not defunct, but is only getting more and more emancipated from the unnatural service of terror, and restored to its proper function as a minister of delight. A higher mode of belief is the best exorciser, because it makes the spiritual at one with the actual world instead of hostile, or at best alien. It has been the grossly material interpretations of spiritual doctrine that have given occasion to the two extremes of superstition and unbelief. While the resurrection of the body has been insisted on, that resurrection from the body which is the privilege of all has been forgotten. Superstition in its baneful form was largely due to the enforcement by the Church of arguments that involved a *petitio principii*, for it is the miserable necessity of all false logic to accept of very ignoble allies. Fear became at length its chief expedient for the maintenance of its power; and as there is a beneficent necessity laid upon a majority of mankind to sustain and perpetuate the order of things they are born into, and to make all new ideas manfully prove their right, first, to be at all, and then to be heard, many even superior minds dreaded the tearing away of vicious accretions as dangerous to the whole edifice of religion and society. But if this old ghost be fading away in what we regard as the dawn of a better day, we may console ourselves by thinking that perhaps, after all, we are not so *much* wiser than our ancestors. The rappings, the trance mediums, the visions of hands without bodies, the sounding of musical instruments without visible fingers, the miraculous inscriptions on the naked flesh, the enlivenment of furniture,—we have invented none of them, they are all heirlooms. There is surely room for yet another schoolmaster, when a score of seers advertise themselves in Boston newspapers. And if the metaphysicians can never rest till they have taken their watch to pieces and have arrived at a happy positivism as to its structure, though at the risk of bringing it to a no-go, we may be sure that the majority will always take more satisfaction in seeing its hands mysteriously move on, even if they should err a little as to the precise time of day established by the astronomical observatories.